ISKANDER

MARSHALL M. KIRKMAN

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ISKANDER

"Splitting it asunder, it went down with all its crew."— *Page 196.*

ISKANDER

A Romance of the Court of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great

BY

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"THE ROMANCE OF GILBERT HOLMES," "PRIMITIVE CARRIERS," "THE SCIENCE OF RAILWAYS," IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES, AND OTHER WORKS

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INTRODUCTION

The closing years of Philip of Macedon and the rise of Alexander the Great are among the most remarkable in the history of the world, and it is amid the startling events and savage tragedies of this transition period that the story is laid. It was an age of great men—of Philip, Alexander, Demosthenes and Aristotle; an age of fair women: of intrigue, force, dramatic happenings; of crimes innumerable; and, through Alexander's love attachment for Roxana, a period of romantic interest.

CHICAGO, June, 1903.

CHAPTER I.

THE RIGHTFUL KING.

"Fair Pella, fortress of the plain, thou art my capital, mine, mine, thy rightful King's—not Philip's!"

Such was the sorrowful, half angry exclamation of the Prince Amyntas, an officer of exalted rank, as he drew rein in plain view of the war-like capital of Macedonia. Behind him a troop of Thessalian cavalry halted in respectful silence, awaiting with patience his further movements. Their steeds and accoutrements were stained with dust and sweat, and otherwise bore evidence of a long and fatiguing march, as did those of their commander. A page, armed with a short sword and shining helmet, rode beside the Prince, and hearing his exclamation, turned to see if any had heard, exclaiming:

"Do not speak thus, sweet Prince, for your words would cost you your life if they came to the King's ears."

"Say rather the bloody usurper, Orestes. Yes; and may the Gods forsake him living and the furies that haunt the dark abyss of death pursue him when dead, for the cruel wrong he has done me," Amyntas cried, furiously, throwing his horse back on its haunches.

"Hush, sweet Prince, for to wish another such harm is to call down the anger of the Gods on your own head," the young page answered with a look of horror.

"I care not. I would I had the beast upon a spit before a blazing fire, I would be a thousand years in the roasting of him," the other responded with sullen rage.

"Oh, master, do not give utterance to such thoughts lest, coming to the King, they cause your destruction," Orestes exclaimed, in a supplicating voice, looking furtively behind him.

"A curse upon him; a monstrous spider, ever weaving a web into which men are lured only to be devoured."

"Oh, sweet master! Though often harsh to others, he has ever been gentle to you, sparing your life while putting to death others he had not half the cause to fear."

"'Twas but another expression of his cruelty, Orestes. To have killed me would have been a mercy. For I, who should approach yonder capital as its King, now enter it as the messenger of him who has stolen my birthright. Nor did he filch it as man against man, but while I, a puling infant, could scarce lisp his name."

"'Tis said he did so to preserve his own life and yours, sweet master."

"Do you condone the act, you?" Amyntas responded, turning fiercely upon his companion, half raising the javelin he held in his hand.

"I know not how it was," the other mildly responded.

"Then be silent. The treachery and greed of Philip is beyond your childlike mind. 'Tis only his absence that quiets the hearts of men. For see! Away, his capital sleeps in peaceful stillness in the summer sun. Present, it would resound with the cries of men, the blare of trumpets and the clang of hurrying soldiers.

"'Tis a grateful peace, sweet Prince, for the wars give men little time for rest."

"Men! There are no longer men, but slaves. At his bidding we lie down in our tracks like grateful hounds, our stomachs empty and our wounds uncared for. Nor

dare we ask when the one will be filled or the other cured."

"But if the King exacts much from others, oh Prince, he gives as freely of his own body and blood, as witness his missing eye and open wounds."

"Do you excuse him, you fool? Fie! For every wound he bears he has put a thousand men to death, and for his missing eye twenty thousand Greeks were butchered and as many sold to slavery. Not men only, but weeping women and wailing children. Bah! If he strives, Orestes, he alone is benefited, for he rights no wrongs but his own."

"Nay, do we not all share in the glory and wealth that the wars bring? If we sometimes have not an obol in our pockets the King is scarcely more fortunate. And if the wars are cruel, are they not followed by peace and security, things before unknown?" Orestes exclaimed with growing spirit.

"Peace! Yes, the peace that follows the hurricane or tidal wave; the security that follows the feast of the bear. Today we gorge ourselves, to live afterwards on the remembrance of it. Ours is no longer the life of freemen, but of jackals."

"At least none may molest us save him, and that was not always so."

"Our wives and daughters were safer in an Illyrian camp than near the quarters of his Companion Cavalry, such license the King accords the lecherous favorites for their base subserviency. And 'tis by such agencies that he comes at last to pose as a God while we sweat and grunt without profit or honor."

"I like not such speech of our King, oh Prince."

"Say you so, stripling? You have not been wont to

find fault with such utterances, knowing the cause I have to hate the monster you call 'Our King,' " Amyntas cried, turning threateningly upon his youthful companion.

"If the King be as you say, Alexander, who will succeed him, has committed no offense; he at least is gentle and true in all things," Orestes responded, striving to turn the other's thoughts.

"The jackal's whelp. His appetite is not less sharp than the other's, albeit he cannot look a woman in the face or listen to the rustle of her garments without blushing; things so sweet to Philip's eyes and ears."

"No one can say aught against the Prince, try as they may, for he possesses every virtue, and each one has a counterpart in his skill at arms and courage in battle. Fitly enough is he called 'The Young Lion of Macedonia.' "

"Lion, thou fool! Yes, if a yellow mane be all that is needed to make him such. In some ways, though, the name is fit enough. For underneath his soft skin beats a heart so insatiable of glory that the blood of all mankind will not suffice to slake its thirst. You are a fool, Orestes. Was it to hear such prattle that I have taught you arms and the graces of life? There is no measuring the arrogance of Alexander now that he is given preference over older and better men."

"There is not a soldier in the camp who boasts so little, oh Prince. He loves glory as other men do wine and women, that is all. And well he may, for no one in Macedonia, not Clitus even, can stand before him with sword or uplifted lance. Who can hurl a javelin with such mortal hurt as Alexander? You do your cousin wrong in every way, oh Prince. For he is in all things, in learning and chivalrous courage, superior to other

men. Even the King must give way to him in arms. Yet, for all that there is scarce a nobleman in the kingdom as modest as he." And Orestes, in his anger, losing all awe of his companion, looked him in the face as if he would enforce the truth of what he said with his sword.

"The fawning sycophants yield him preference in arms because of his high rank and thorough fear of the King, not because he is superior to them in any way," Amyntas cried, incensed at the youth's manner.

"In the trial of skill on the heights of Edessa, where the identity of all was hidden, he excelled every one as I have said."

"Mummery! Mummery! Under his complaisant manner he has the ferocity of his mother, and appetites as brutal as his father's, which, when satiated with blood and the flames of burning cities, drown themselves in beastly drunkenness. Or worse, seek some new concubine among the creatures who await his embrace with outstretched arms and inviting glances."

"I will not listen to such foul speech, Prince though you be. You would not dare speak thus were I a man," the other cried laying his hand unconsciously on his sword.

"What, canting slave, dost thou dare threaten your Prince and rightful King? Tomorrow you will betray me, your master. Shade of my father, the mighty King! Is it not enough that I should be cheated of the throne, but beardless boys must bid me hold my peace under threat of their displeasure! Ye Gods! 'Tis too much," and raising his javelin in a frenzy of rage he hurled it with unerring force full at his unsuspecting companion. All too late, Orestes, thinking no harm, sought to interpose the shield which hung about his neck. "There,

ingrate, go before and prepare a place for your idols, for they shall quickly follow if flesh be vulnerable to steel or poison," Amyntas screamed as Orestes, swaying to and fro in his saddle, fell headlong to the ground.

The troop of horsemen that followed, seeing the Prince, their leader, halt, had drawn up across the road and stood patiently awaiting his movements, but too far away to hear aught of what was said. Observing Orestes lay his hand on his sword, followed immediately by Amyntas hurling his javelin, Clitus, the officer in charge, spurred forward, his face pale with surprise and anger.

"What thing has this poor youth done or said that you should thus strike him down all unprepared?" he cried, springing from his horse and lifting Orestes' head.

"What thing?" the latter cried, backing away, pale and agitated, "What but to basely traduce the King and Prince, and as if that were not enough, ye Gods, he must needs threaten me with his sword, as you saw. In the heat of passion, and all unwisely it may be, but out of my great love for the King and the sweet Prince, I killed him." And regaining in some measure his composure, Amyntas sighed and dropped his eyes as if he could even yet condone the lad's treason in regret at having killed him.

"Poor Orestes! He slander the King, say you; he who thought him a God? I would not believe it from one of less exalted rank, Amyntas," Clitus answered, pressing his lips to the cheek of Orestes.

"Nay, that was months past, and ere loss of preferment had so soured him that his tongue oozed poison like a marsh-adder."

"You should have disarmed, not killed him, a mere child."

"Yes, that would have been the better way, but enraged at his treasonable speech I thought not to restrain my hand. He doubly deserved to die the death of a traitor, for he meditated nothing less than the death of both Philip and Alexander, and so he boasted."

"I like not to see the blood of our brave young nobles thus shed. 'Tis not such as he, poor boy, that the King has cause to fear, but those who eat his bread while they envy him his state," Clitus hotly responded.

"Do you insinuate so base a charge against me? By the Gods I will send you to keep the traitor company."

"Nay, it is not for me to judge," Clitus answered, springing to the back of his horse in all haste. "But stay your hand, oh Prince, for by the beard of Cyclops if you but lift it so much as the width of your bridle rein I will kill you were you the King," and holding his lance high in air he awaited the other's movements.

"Nay, I meant you no harm, Clitus. We are too old in companionship of arms to think evil of each other. Put down your lance. 'Twas an idle speech. I mourn the boy's death not less than you, traitor though he was. And in proof of what I say, do you stay here and see that the body is fitly cared for; I must not lose further time in reaching the city," and raising his sword aloft, as a signal to the troop, he put spurs to his horse, the soldiers casting pitying glances upon their prostrate companion as they passed.

Dismounting, Clitus sat himself down, and resting Orestes' head upon his lap murmured, a sob filling his throat:

"Eye of Cyclops, what could it have been! Not what Amyntas claims, I'd stake my life. More likely 'twas he who threatened the King, for he bears him a mortal

grudge, though Philip will not believe it. Poor boy! You were too brave to die thus dishonored."

At this Orestes, as if brought back to life by the soft speech of the other, opened his eyes, glazed with the film of death.

"Must I die, Clitus?" he murmured. "You weep! Then it must be so. And the other, has he gone?" he went on, a shudder passing through his frame as he sought to raise himself. "Oh, 'tis hard to die, Clitus. Everything is so beautiful and life so new, and the wars, Clitus, the wars! But oh, the pain," he moaned, laying his hand on his breast where the lance lay buried, the light Cretan shaft having broken as he fell.

"'Twill be over soon, sweet child. Think not of dying, but of the friends who will mourn your death. Oh, I am crazy, crazy at your undoing," Clitus sobbed, distracted.

"I thought to have died fighting for the King, not this way, Clitus, for he was very tender to me when I was stricken at the Winter battle."

"Yes, yes, and so he will believe, let Amyntas say what he will. Oh ye Gods, did ever loyal page serve so cruel a master!"

"He was in a passion, Clitus, and so struck me down, not knowing what he did. Hold it not against him, for he has suffered more than most men and is crazed with brooding over his wrongs. Lift me up, Clitus—how still the city; and the black mountains—how they top the plain! Oh, Clitus, I would I did not have to die," he sobbed.

"Nor would I have you, dear heart, but every one must die, and the soldier more quickly than another," Clitus answered, making believe life a very small thing indeed.

"Hold me nearer to you, Clitus. In your arms; I'm sinking; it's death, Clitus, death. Oh, mother—I'm dying—mother—save me, save me!—watch—over—the —King—Clitus—and—the—Prince,—they are in danger. See! The Prince, Clitus. Look! He heads the charge. Hearken! The troop answer his cry! There! The whirl of the dust, and the thunder—they strike—again and again—the Thebans waver, give way, they fly —they fly—the Prince is—mother, mother——," and with the whispered word upon his lips his body relaxed and with a sob filling his throat the young soldier lay still.

For a long time Clitus gazed on the prostrate body, tears streaming down his bronzed face. Then, remembering how the gentle youth had met his death, he held his clenched hand aloft, crying:

"May the Gods pursue and punish Amyntas, the cowardly assassin! To fall thus, and so young," he went on, his mood changing. "But 'tis only a day sooner, for everyone must die."

"Yes, but not until our appointed hour," exclaimed a deep voice almost in his ear. Looking up Clitus beheld the speaker bending far down over the side of his horse, scanning the features of the prostrate youth. "'Tis only a faint, and his hurt may not be mortal if the iron did not cleave the heart; had it done that he would never have spoken."

"Who are you?" Clitus exclaimed, starting to his feet and eying the speaker with kindly interest, so assured and gentle was the other's voice.

"My name would mean little to you, for I am naught but a simple leech, following with my slave, for greater safety, in the train of the exalted Prince Amyntas."

The speaker, as Clitus saw, was a man past middle

life, but of such dignity and commanding presence that his age was lost in the majesty of his bearing. His meagre form was enveloped in a long cloak which reached quite to the ground, while a soft hat of Macedonian pattern shaded his dark and piercing eyes. His beard, combed with the utmost care, covered his breast, giving him a patriarchal air quite foreign to the native Macedonian. Having made himself known, the leech, without further speech, dismounted and knelt beside the stricken youth, pressing his ear against the other's breast.

"It is as I thought; his heart still beats, though delay in applying needed remedies would quickly prove his death. The shock was too much, worn out as he is by the long and fatiguing march."

"He was already weak from a previous illness and the fatigues of the Grecian campaign," Clitus explained.

"Yes; and see!" the leech continued, "here is another wound, a spear thrust, and but partially healed."

"Poor youth, 'tis a wound he received in the Winter battle, but made believe it had healed when he joined the king at Cheronea."*

"The new wound is not mortal," the leech went on, and taking a vial from the pocket of his cloak, poured its contents into Orestes' open mouth. No sooner had

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*Properly, Chæronea. But as only the "e" is sounded in this conjunction of vowels, it is confusing rather than enlightening to all save Greek scholars. Therefore, where these conjunctions serve no general purpose they are disregarded here and elsewhere throughout the book.

he done this than the youth's eyes softly closed, and from his lips there issued a gentle sigh.

"Ye Gods! You have killed him," Clitus exclaimed with flaming eyes.

Making no answer, the stranger arose and took from the net fastened about his horse an earthen vessel, and opening it allowed the liquid it contained to flow over the wounded part. Now taking firm hold of the javelin he gently pulled it from the gaping wound. Losing no time, he flooded the deep cavity with the soothing liquid, upon which the blood ceased to flow, the flesh closing about the hurt as if from a natural cause.

"The wound is not mortal and in an hour he will have regained his senses. But 'twill not do to move him, lest the wound open afresh, or he die of exhaustion," he went on, rising to his feet. "Is there not some habitation near, where we can take him?"

"Yes, yonder hut, not an arrow's flight from where we stand," Clitus answered, pointing towards the river Lydias.

"'Tis more like an ancient castle."

"I would it were a palace. 'Twould be none too good for the gentle Princess."

"The Princess?"

"Yes, the sorrowing widow of Menetaus."

"The Princess Parcledes," the leech exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, that most unhappy of women."

"I know her history well, for I was long attendant upon her husband, the unfortunate Prince, during his exile," the leech responded in a low voice, as if saddened by the remembrance.

"Perhaps in some atonement, who can tell, Philip has

given her this asylum, and here she lives in close retirement with her daughter Eurydice."

"Unhappy Princess," the leech answered, scanning the ancient structure.

"Kind of heart, she will gladly give Orestes a bed, if affliction has not changed her nature."

"Affliction makes mankind softer, not harder. But come! We talk when we should act," and wrapping Orestes' body in his cloak they slowly made their way toward Parcledes' hut. Approaching the river, they saw beneath them a rambling building of rough stone, rudely cemented, weather beaten and black with centuries of age. The stout door that faced the plain was closed and no smoke issued from the roof to indicate that the hut was inhabited.

"I was wrong; the hut is no longer tenanted," Clitus exclaimed, grievously disappointed, as he looked down on the time-worn structure.

"It does not matter," the leech answered shortly, pushing forward, "a good fire will soon make it habitable."

Reaching the hut, Clitus struck the door blow on blow with the hilt of his sword, until at last, as he was casting about for some means to force an entrance, a tremulous voice, half choked with fear, called out:

"Go your way, stranger, nor seek to force an entrance."

"We cannot, sweet friend, if we would, for a brave man's life depends on our finding shelter, and that quickly," Clitus cried.

"Who are you?" the voice answered after a moment's pause.

"Soldiers of the King."

Hearing this the inmate of the hut gave a frightened cry, but made no other response.

"Give me leave," the leech exclaimed to Clitus. "Your voice has too much the tone of command," and turning to the door went on: "We mean you no harm, be you whom you may; but come as suppliants, bearing the body of a wounded youth whom no one can deny shelter without offending the Gods. Open to us and fear not."

"I am alone and dare not if I would," the voice answered, as if only half assured.

"You have no cause to fear, for we are neither robbers nor betrayers of the weak. Open," the leech went on sternly, "if you would not offend the Gods by your perversity."

"I pray you wait my mother's return; 'twill be but a moment," the voice replied, but no longer in fear.

"Your roof will shield the stricken man from the heat and noonday sun. Open now, lest his death be on your head."

To this appeal there was no response for some seconds, but at last, as if her heart overcame her fears, she opened wide the door. Nor did they wonder at her hesitancy when they beheld her face. For she was but a child, just blooming into womanhood, and with such gentle mixture of dignity and soft timidity that she appeared like an apparition as she stood looking out from the lonely hut. Gazing in pity on Orestes' slight form and pale face she exclaimed:

"You are welcome. No one in distress is ever denied shelter here."

"We ask nothing but a place in which to lay the poor youth," the leech answered, bending low in obeisance to the young girl, as if she were a Queen.

"How came he by the grievous wound?" she exclaimed, advancing to Orestes' side and tenderly smoothing the linen tunic about his throat. "Was he of the troop that passed a moment since?"

"Yes," Clitus broke in, "they were frolicking in boisterous play, overjoyed at their return home; and in the scrimmage the youth met the thrust which came so near to costing him his life, if indeed it does not finally end that way."

"He will live, fear not, if he have quiet and care," the leech exclaimed as they bore Orestes' body within the house.

"He shall have both here, I promise you," Eurydice, for such was the young girl's name, answered, and calling to a slave woman she bade her fix a couch for the wounded man. Hastening away, the slave soon returned, bringing lion skins and sheets of snow white linen. With these she quickly made a pallet, upon which Clitus and the leech lost no time in depositing their wounded companion.

Refreshing the wound with soothing lotions, and binding it with soft compresses, the leech arose and looked around on the cool and refreshing room, exclaiming:

"If we had searched the kingdom we could not have found so fit a place as this."

While they stood thus about Orestes' couch, the door opened and a woman of majestic presence and gentle manners entered the room. Scanning the apartment and seeing Clitus she cried out with smiling countenance:

"To what happy chance is it that I owe a visit from so good a friend and so brave a soldier?"

"To a most cruel accident, sweet Princess, that has

befallen my friend and companion in arms," Clitus responded, saluting her.

"You are welcome, but who is the unfortunate youth, for he is scarce more," she went on, her gaze resting on the wounded lad.

"Orestes, a noble youth, page to the sovereign Prince, Amyntas," Clitus replied, not trusting himself to say more.

"And your companion, Clitus, if it be not rude to ask?"

"I am Jaron," the other interposed, "a leech of the city of Hypata of Thessaly, exalted Princess. A dealer in magic, to those who crave such stimulant. But of this I take no account more than of the love filters in which I deal; though in such things I question not the belief of others. The first I use to give hope to the despairing and allay the fears of the distressed, or for pay if such things are craved by the superstitious. But my remedies, gentle Princess, are those of the leech, the distillations of herbs and minerals that have been used for generations by my people."

"Enough! You are welcome! My hut is open to the wounded youth, and you, Clitus, and this good leech. Such as we have to bestow we will gladly give," she answered, going to the couch and kneeling beside Orestes. Gazing long and attentively at the upturned face, she at last bent over and kissed it, murmuring: "My son would have been like him, Clitus, had he been spared by the stern King."

"He needs but quiet and good nursing," Jaron went on, disregarding her words. "His youth will win him back to health. But you, Clitus, good friend, need not stay if the King's business calls you hence. I have naught to urge me and may remain."

"'Tis a thing I should remember, for I bear dispatches that I may not delay longer," Clitus answered, and kneeling down he kissed Orestes, murmuring a prayer to the Gods for his recovery. Rising to his feet, he saluted those present and without further speech took his departure.

DACIA (SERVIA)
DARDANIA
(MONTENEGRO)
ILLYRIA
(ALBANIA)
DRILO
SCORDUS MTS.
BERMIUS MTS.
RIVER AXIS
EDESSA
MACEDONIA
THRACE
NESTUS
THE STRYMON
PELLA
HALIACMON
CHALCIDICE
OLYNTHUS
THERMAIC GULF
(GULF OF SALONICA)
OLYMPUS
PAMBOTIS LAKE
EPIRUS
(ALBANIA)
PINDUS
DODONA
PASSARON
IONIAN SEA
(ADRIATIC)
THESSALY
VALE OF TEMPE
PELION
EGEAN SEA
PENEUS
LARISSA
ENIPEUS
ACHERO
OTHRYS MTS.
CHERONEA
GREECE
THEBES
ATHENS
MACEDONIA 336 B.C.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSPIRING PRINCES.

The year in which our story opens was the twenty-first of the reign of Philip of Macedon and the three hundred and thirty-eighth before the Christian Era. Pella, the capital of Macedonia, that had so often resounded with the thunder of the Companion Cavalry and the tread of the embattled Phalanx, now made no sign of life save where some sentinel stood erect and motionless, or noisy children disturbed the quietude of the street.

The scene spread out before Amyntas as he hurried forward was one, indeed, to have soothed his fiery passions had his heart been less sore or his mind less occupied with its wrongs. Far-off, on the distant horizon, towering mountains bathed in the blue mist of a summer's sun met the attentive eye. Near at hand and stretching away to the lofty heights a verdant plain lay outstretched. In its very center and like a glistening gem Pella, the fair capital of Macedonia, stood revealed. To one side, and without the walls of the city, a squadron of mounted troops were practicing with spear and sword. Nearer, and as if in peaceful industry, a company of soldiers with lances of varying lengths were going through the formations of the Phalanx, a thing Philip had conceived, and that no enemy could overcome. To the left the Lydias, dotted with sails and slow moving barges, wended its way toward the Gulf, and so to the Grecian sea. Beyond this a marsh extended, half enveloping the city, its green border thickly sprinkled with grazing cat-

tle. Of Philip's mighty army there was no sign. For it was with the King in Greece, victorious at last over the forces of Athens and Thebes in that final struggle wherein all went down before his victorious arms.

But of this no word had yet reached Pella and its waiting Queen, or the hushed wives and sweethearts of those who had gone forth to battle for Macedonia's King. Thus weeks had passed, wherein those left behind scarce spoke above a whisper, so great and absorbing was the anxiety of all. So it was on that hot afternoon in August when, as we have seen, the sovereign Prince, Amyntas, with an escort of horse, spurred on to the waiting city. Reaching the capital the shrill blast of his bugles and the thunder of his horses' feet startled the sleeping city and brought its inhabitants running into the hot and dusty streets. Raising his arm in salutation, yet no way slackening his speed, he bade the trumpeter sound the note of victory. At this the gaping crowd gave a mighty shout which, oft repeated, was carried forward, so that the whole city quickly knew the courier's message. Sounding the note anew as he approached the citadel, the guard and soldiers loitering about the entrance hurried forward, welcoming him with uplifted arms and eager cries. Disdaining all speech, except to say that the Macedonian army was victorious, Amyntas dismounted, bidding his followers seek quarters in the barracks near at hand. Motioning the guard to hoist the gate that guarded the outer entrance, he hurried across the narrow bridge that separated the city from the lofty citadel of the King.

This mighty structure was Philip's work, and he being poor made it answer the five-fold purpose of a palace, treasury, magazine of arms, fortress and prison of state. No part of this great and impregnable fortress remains

today, after the lapse of twenty-two centuries, to mark the spot where it reared its lofty front. But the curious traveler may still discern traces of the island on which it stood, but so washed by rains and river floods that it is now scarce higher than the surrounding marsh. The massive blocks of stone of which it was constructed, brought from the neighboring mountains, were long ages ago carried away by Roman or Turk, to be used for other and more peaceful purposes. Access to the great fortress was by a swinging bridge across the Lydias, the citadel being defended on that side by an outer wall, interspersed with towers, slotted at irregular distances for its better protection. From these and the heights above, and from the castle walls as well, the garrison could at will defend the mighty structure with little or no risk to themselves.

Entrance to the citadel was by an open way, protected by a massive portcullis studded with iron and of such strength and thickness that it was believed to be impregnable. The protecting wall, within which the gate was raised, was thirty feet in height and ten in thickness. It ran along the margin of the river, covering the front of the fortress, and connecting with the latter at either end by a wall of equal height. In the enclosure thus formed a strong guard was stationed, and here much of the business of the fortress was transacted. Passing from this open space through a portcullis, similar to that in the outer wall, admission was gained to an interior and roomy court forming the vestibule of the fortress. This spacious enclosure was paved with marble slabs, its walls being covered by silken portieres and trophies of Philip's wars. In this room the captain of the guard made his headquarters, and here the frequenters and gossips of the court came to meet their friends and discuss the latest

news. Opposite the entrance to the vestibule a protected way led to the magazines and offices of the fortress which covered the whole of the lower floor. On either side of this door interior stairs led to the living part of the castle above. Along the length of these stairs, at frequent intervals, the walls were pierced with openings, from which resistance might still be offered should an enemy gain access to the court below. At the top the stairs opened on an extended portico, upheld by marble columns that looked out on an interior court. Around this the towering fortress rose, tier upon tier, to its full height. For the comfort and convenience of those occupying the gloomy dwelling the lower story of the fortress was covered over, forming the floor of the great court. This was used as a promenade and for the banquets which the King gave his officers and nobles at frequent intervals. Facing the great court, wide galleries ran around the structure, giving access to the rooms of the palace on the different floors. Besides these others were connected by secret doors and hidden stairways, devised by Philip for the convenience and greater safety of the royal family. The prison, a most important adjunct of the fortress, occupied the topmost story, access to it being gained by interior and closely guarded stairways.

The outer walls of the citadel were pierced throughout their height by irregular openings, as in the case of the river front. In its lower part these openings were scarce larger than a man's hand and designed rather as a means of defense than to afford light or air, these being gained from the interior court. About the cells of the prison the openings were somewhat larger, these being the only means afforded for light or air. Surrounding the fortress on the three sides not protected by the river there was a

ditch one hundred feet in width and thirty in depth, filled with water from the river Lydias. Beyond this for a mile or more an impassable morass further protected the fortress against assault.

Apart from the main entrance and on one side, and so small as to be scarce discernible, a strongly guarded postern afforded ingress and egress to the royal family. Here they might enter or leave the palace unnoticed, their barges being drawn up close against the fortress wall, for of platform or landing there was no sign. And of this door, it was said, Philip, because of his numerous liaisons, made much greater use at night than at any other time of the day. About the courts and balconies of the citadel soldiers stood guard day and night, the regulations being those of a fortress in time of war. Nor was this a foolish provision, for until Philip's strong reign Princes and disaffected chiefs plotted continually against the King, not hesitating at any means by which to compass his overthrow or death. On the summit and walls of the fortress, as a further protection, machines were placed for casting missiles and contrivances for pouring boiling water and pitch on the heads of assailants. Besides these there were ballistas for throwing stones, catapults and bows for casting darts; in fact, every appliance known to that rugged and war-like age. Such was Philip's palace.

Amyntas, gaining admission to the vestibule of the great structure, found it deserted save by the captain of the guard, who sat moodily drawing lines with his scabbard on the marble floor. Looking up and seeing the other, he sprang to his feet, crying:

"Amyntas, by all the Gods!"

Returning the other's salutation, the Prince answered in a voice far from amiable:

"Yes, Pausanias, it is I, Amyntas, the Courier of Philip."

"And whence come you, good cousin?"

"Where, think you, save from Philip's camp," Amyntas answered, seating himself and motioning the other to do the same.

"First, a cup of wine to cheer you, for you look worn and depressed," Pausanias exclaimed, filling a goblet for the Prince and another for himself. These being drank, he went on: "Your coming is most welcome, Amyntas, for we have heard nothing for days and our nerves are on edge from the suspense. What news do you bring, good or bad?"

"Bad, if your interests lie not on Philip's side."

"Is it so, sweet Prince? I had hoped the contrary. For 'tis plain," Pausanias exclaimed despondently, "that every triumph of Philip and his aspiring son, every hour they live, but the more surely fixes our dependent state."

"Touch me not too nearly, Pausanias, for I am that raw that I could strike my own brother dead, if he but offended me by a look."

"Forgive me, for you have most cause for anger. But I heard it said that your marriage to Philip's daughter had reconciled you to your state, though it was but a crumb to you while saving the whole loaf to Philip," the other answered ironically.

"Could any one but a fool have thought the chaining of his helpless daughter to my shattered fortunes could make me more content? Nay, this new servitude but deepens my hatred of the monster!"

"Time will soften your rancor and still your young

ambition. 'Tis ever thus with the belated Prince," Pausanias answered in a voice to stir the other's blood.

"No; by the Gods, no! Each passing hour but adds to my hatred. I were worse than a shackled slave, Pausanias, could aught, save my rights, move me to quietude."

"'Tis folly to dream of any change, Amyntas. Only the death of Philip and Alexander can open a way to the throne, for they were never more firmly fixed than now. No one, unless indeed it be the King of Persia, longer disputes their power, and he, 'tis said, can scarce sit his throne from fright. But tell me, cousin, is it true then that Philip's arms and subtle craft have been crowned with complete success in this final trial of strength?"

"Yes, Thebes lies despoiled, trampled in the dust, her people sold to slavery. Athens, so long a thorn in Philip's side, has ceased her chattering and sits dumb and trembling beside her fish-baskets and empty tribunals. Seeing this," Amyntas continued with bitter speech, "all Greece will yield, save enfeebled Sparta. Thus, at last, the beast sits enthroned amid seas of blood with none so courageous as to oppose his will."

"I would I had been there to see the Attic wind-bags when they at last collapsed. Was it a hurricane, Amyntas, or merely a bad smell?"

"They might have won, the driveling idiots. But they must needs oppose us without fit generals and, answering Philip's taunts, rush down into the level plain to meet him on ground chosen by himself."

"It was like them, Amyntas," Pausanias answered contemptuously. "But if it be true that Philip is now supreme, nothing intervenes between him and Persia's conquest. And with that all hope of our redemption is lost

forever—if indeed Philip should live so long," he added, with a leer.

"Yes; and as if it were not enough to rob me of my throne, I must needs stay behind, so Philip avers, to guard the women while others gather the sweets of victory. Oh most unhappy fate, to be born a King and live a parasite!"

"Your misfortunes others share, for the kingdom swarms with Princes plucked from their thrones that Philip's house may grow," Pausanias answered bitterly. "My own country was once as mighty as Macedonia. Now it is nothing, while I, its rightful Prince, have scarce more honor at the court than the page who holds the King's stirrup."

"And rightly, too, for you, no more than the other captives, will raise a hand to regain your rights. I, only, still hope and strive for my own."

"Say not so, sweet Prince. You know not what is in the hearts of men. But Philip's eyes and ears are like the stars of heaven, so infinite are the spies who watch over the safety of the state."

"To frighten cowards, Pausanias. Your white faces and supple knees denote all too well a lack of enterprise and manly courage."

"Has my cheek less color than yours, Amyntas? Or my knees greater pliancy? Point but the way, for I, not less than you, will never have a dreamless night till Philip and his son are dead."

"Vain sounding words! Amidst such vaporings Philip sleeps in his bed and picking here and there, adds daily to the number of his wives."

"Have you done more than the others, Amyntas? No! With greater provocation you hide behind the skirts of

Philip's child, while others, as deserving, freeze in the open streets."

"Not so! While others deplore their unhappy fate, in some secure corner, I only have sought to weaken the King's power by destroying his aspiring son."

"That indeed was an ingenious thing to do, if it be true," Pausanias answered skeptically. "Come! tell me the brave story, good cousin. I did not think you half so enterprising."

"No! the tale is without point, and my tongue halts in the telling because of its failure," Amyntas replied in sullen mood.

"Nay, that does not matter. Go on. 'Twas a brave thing to attempt, however it ended."

"Long I sought a chance, but without avail, until at Cheronea fortune seemed to point the way. For I followed close upon the heels of Alexander, who fought in the very front. At last, when in the thick of the fight he was beset on every side, seeing the chance and being sure, I hurled my spear full at his exposed body."

"Well, well, go on! You at least wounded the lion's whelp?"

"No, not even that. For stooping suddenly to rescue Clitus, who lay prostrate on the ground, the missile passed him harmlessly. And as if this were not enough, it must needs strike Theagenes, the Theban commander, who, but for the blow, would have transfixed the Prince with his uplifted spear."

"Ye Gods! It must indeed be true, as Philip claims, that some kindly Deity watches over the fortune of these usurping Princes."

"I know not, but so exalted is Philip's courage that he will not believe harm can come to him unless the Gods

decree it. Nay, he scarce believes treachery can exist where he is, so swollen is his state."

"You speak of him as if you somehow thought him great," Pausanias answered with a sneer.

"I do, and in that hold his offense the greater. For only small men, like mice, can find excuse for filching from the helpless when entrusted to their honor."

"Did not Alexander observe your flying spear and so accuse you?" Pausanias asked, reverting to the former subject.

"Yes. Seeing the Theban fall, transfixed, he turned about and smiled his thanks. After the battle, in which those who followed him turned defeat into victory, he sought me out and pledged me as his deliverer from death."

"Then you must needs be in high favor at the court?" Pausanias answered enviously.

"Yes, and when opportunity comes I will use it to destroy the whole brood, not leaving one."

"Through this miscarriage then we may behold the fruition of our hopes," Pausanias answered pompously. "Such are the happenings of men. When their fortunes are seemingly lost, the door flies open and they regain their rights. But tell me, if you are not weary, how does Alexander bear himself, the retriever of a failing fight? This coming on the heels of other honors must so puff him with pride of self that he can scarce set foot on the yielding earth."

"No, this new glory he accepts as a thing ordained and but a part of the path he is to tread."

"'Tis like him, for he is not as those about him, but seems always to live in the future more than in the present."

"Yes; and have you never noticed, Pausanias, he looks not at you, but through you, as if caught by some object beyond. By the Gods! except that his life is in my way I could love him for the serenity and courage with which he faces the fortunes of life. As it is, I hate him and live only to find a way to kill him and his usurping father.

CHAPTER III.

OLYMPIAS, QUEEN OF MACEDONIA.

While Amyntas and Pausanias were thus complaining of their wrongs and threatening both the King and Alexander, the prolonged blast of a trumpet from without the fortress broke in upon their speech.

" 'Tis the signal of the Queen to open the outer gate," Pausanias exclaimed, without leaving his seat.

"Does she go much abroad, or is it as formerly?" Amyntas asked.

"No; she scarce leaves the fortress from one week's end to another. But the mood seizing her, she will trail back and forth for hours in the windings of the Lydias, speaking to no one. But here the tigress comes," Pausanias exclaimed, springing to his feet as the gate of the fortress was upraised, revealing the Queen advancing with her retinue of women and pages.

Olympias, Queen of Macedonia, so great in her sorrows and so masterful in her ways, was still young. But her face, which had once been supremely beautiful, was now clouded with the disappointments of her life and the fierce passions to which she gave unrestrained sway. It was not, as in her youth, the face of a trusting woman, but that of a lioness, eager, ambitious and craving. A face that looked out with fierce questioning eyes from a wilderness of yellow hair that no net or hood could hold. Hers was the face of a woman that only trusting love could have subdued and that, meeting deception, would flash back with fierce scorn and implacable hatred. Disappointed in Philip, whose love scarce lasted through

the nuptial hour, all her happiness now rested in Alexander, whom she treasured with tender love. Philip's gross indulgences that only a complaisant wife could have looked upon with calmness, excited in her such furious rage and unbridled speech that the court was constantly in a turmoil of excitement because of it. The King, whose sins were of daily occurrence, heightened his offense by openly questioning her fidelity, and doing so professed to find excuse therein for still further neglecting her. Thus it came about, at last, that they had no common interests save in their chivalrous son. But now Alexander, siding with his mother in all things, he and those about him, it was thought, were in great danger of losing the King's favor. So that the Queen had come to believe that Alexander's succession might at any moment be endangered by some court intrigue or jealous impulse of the King. Such was her unhappy state, on that August afternoon when Amyntas, seeing her enter the fortress, ran and threw himself on his knees before her, exclaiming:

"Hail, gracious Queen, mother of Alexander, deign to smile upon me for the glorious news I bring!"

"Your countenance, sweet Prince, not less than your words reassure me," she answered, giving him her hand to kiss, pleased at his reference to Alexander.

"Yes, august sovereign, our army again triumphs and all Greece lies prostrate, nor thinks further of disputing Philip's will."

"The triumph of our arms is an oft told tale, Amyntas. Nowhere can men be found to withstand the charge of our well ordered troops," the Queen answered without animation.

"No, nor do they think of it longer, gracious Queen."

"Did many fall on our side? Be careful what you say, Amyntas, for the wives and children of all Macedonia will be stricken or gladdened by your words."

"We suffered little, oh Queen, being the aggressors. But on the side of the Greeks half their force fell or were taken captive."

"The King, is he well? And Alexander, the hope of Macedonia?" she went on eagerly; "how did he bear himself, Amyntas?"

"No words of mine can paint his chivalrous bearing nor the brilliancy of his achievements on the field of battle, oh Queen. The army with one voice acclaim him victor, hailing him as King, so great is its delight."

"Does Philip find offense therein?" the Queen asked with anxious voice.

"No, far from it. For after the great battle he sent for him and embraced him on the field, kissing him on both his cheeks, saying: 'You are more fit to command than I, Alexander.' "

"Oh, glorious, God-like son, to have borne him is to become immortal. 'Twas foretold by the Gods when he was born, Amyntas, that he would do great deeds."

"His acts, gracious Queen, foretell his greatness, nor need we the oracles to confirm it," Amyntas answered, stooping low to conceal the scowl he could not hide.

"Tell me, sweet friend, if I do not tire you, how he bore himself; what did he do in the very heat of battle?"

"He bore himself throughout like a great and chivalrous soldier, oh Queen. Commanding the left wing, he charged the Theban army, leading the way. Breaking their array, he scattered their forces as the tempest whirls the dust through Pella's crowded streets," Amyntas an-

swered, striving to simulate an enthusiasm he did not feel.

"Could not the Sacred Band withstand the Prince? For it has ever been held invincible since at Leuctra it overcame the unconquerable Spartans," the Queen exclaimed, laying hold of Amyntas.

"Not more than the others, oh Queen. Its center pierced, our soldiers cut them down, sparing none."

"Did all perish?" she cried, excited at the thought.

"Yes, for not one would yield or fly. And so not one was left to mourn his fellows or his country's overthrow."

"Gallant, God-like men! Oh, glorious war! Why was I not born a man, Amyntas, to share in its brave exploits?" she cried, excited by what he said.

"Nay, you will live in Alexander and his exploits, oh Queen, for his greatness is all your own," Amyntas exclaimed with angry vehemence, as if plucking a laurel from Philip's brow.

"Yet he is so gentle and loving withal, Amyntas. So trustful and true to his friends and plighted word, that some sweet nymph might have borne him rather than his fierce mother. But go on, what act did he perform after the Thebans fled?"

"Turning to the right like a circling tempest, he attacked the Athenians on their flank, before whom the King was slowly giving ground. Unexpected, his onslaught disorganized their forces and so, after some little resistance, they threw down their arms and sought safety in flight. Afterwards, as I have said, the King and Alexander, meeting on the field of battle, Philip embraced him, exclaiming that Alexander was the greater general, and the more worthy to command."

"No praise, however great, can overtop his merits. But where left you the King and Alexander, good friend?"

"Philip is with the army arranging the details of peace and the dominion of Greece. Alexander meantime has gone as envoy to Athens, it being the policy of the King to treat the Athenians with every indulgence."

"Then we may soon expect their return?"

"The King will be detained pending the negotiations, but the Prince may be expected any day."

"Hasten the hour, that I may again feast my tired eyes on his God-like form!" the Queen exclaimed, turning away.

"That is not all, oh Queen," Amyntas cried, detaining her. "For the King bids me tell you that an embassy from Persia is on its way to Pella, and it is his wish that it be received and entertained with all honor."

"I had not heard before of such a mission," the Queen answered, surprised.

"Nor would you now had we not been victorious. For they came to treat with Demosthenes and the other Greeks. But we winning, they turn now to us as the dominant power."

"So at last the Great King comes to Pella hoping, by diplomacy and Persian gold, to put off the invasion of his empire," the Queen responded, meditating on what the other said.

"So it is thought, oh Queen, and 'tis said, five stout pack mules are not too many to carry the gold they bring," Amyntas answered, aroused at the thought of so much wealth.

"Then the miser Darius must indeed tremble for his throne," she exclaimed scornfully. "But tell me, good Prince, is there no court news of interest? Who among

the sycophants bids highest for the King's favor? Who among them is now his favorite?"

"Attalus, above every one, oh Queen. He only has the King's ear; and because of it, all now pay him court," Amyntas answered, eying the Queen.

"What! Attalus? That monster of treachery and insatiable greed!"

"Yes, oh Queen. And 'tis said he seeks to build his fortune higher by the King's marriage with his too willing niece, Cleopatra. But in this I repeat only common talk," Amyntas answered, maliciously.

"By the Gods, if there be such rumor 'tis false," Pausanias here interposed, pale and trembling. "Cleopatra, my love! She cannot be such a wanton. Nay, I would stake my life on her truth and virtue," he went on as if distracted. But at last observing the Queen's face to darken, he cried: "Pardon, oh Queen, if in my heat I plead too strongly the cause of the weak and defenseless."

"Nay, you waste your breath, Pausanias," the Queen answered, motioning Amyntas back. "The frail Cleopatra, failing to ensnare Alexander, now aims to enmesh the King with her lustful wiles."

"She stoop to become the King's mistress! For it is naught else. No! I would not believe so base a thing were she herself to proclaim it," Pausanias screamed in a frenzy of rage, forgetting the deference he owed the Queen.

"Nay! She aims higher than the office of mistress, good friend. Nothing less than supplanting your Queen will still the cravings of her mad ambition. Others have not been so aspiring. She would pluck me bodily from

the throne," the Queen answered insinuatingly, stirring the other's anger.

"If what you aver be true, oh Queen, I will strangle her ere she commit so great a sin. For she is mine, mine, and all the Gods of high Olympus shall not snatch her from me!"

"Then you love the fickle creature!" the Queen answered, as if now hearing it for the first time.

"She is my blood, my heart, my life. We have been pledged to each other since our very childhood. Attalus knows this well, and if the King be ignorant of it I will go to him. For not even Philip shall thus trespass upon my honor and happiness."

"Restrain your passion, Pausanias. If but a suspicion of what you say and think were to reach the King your head would pay the forfeit," the Queen replied, but not as if displeased at the other's speech.

"I care not for Philip, in such thing, more than a common man. Degraded from my kingly rank, I will not brook further wrong without my vengeance being quenched in his lustful blood," Pausanias cried, white with rage.

"Nay, you will think better of it after a night's rest, and at the wedding be first to kiss the Queen's hand and wish her joy. Love in Macedonia, Pausanias, dies in the hearts of men, however brave, when the King smiles upon their mistresses."

"My love may die, oh Queen, but a greater passion will take its place; a hate that will grow stronger till drowned in the King's blood. If such speech be dangerous I do not ask anyone to hide it," he cried, overcome by his passion.

"Nay, you may be as frank as you will with me, your

Queen. And glad I am that there is one Macedonian whose love of honor is greater than his craving for place or preferment," she concluded, smiling upon him.

"Thanks, gracious Queen. You will aid me in preventing the foul wrong the King meditates?" Pausanias cried with supplicating voice.

"No, good Pausanias, I cannot promise aught against the King. But your just wrath enlists my tender interest. There! Say not another word. When you have bathed and supped come to me. Perhaps together we may contrive some way. Meanwhile keep your own counsel, nor breathe aloud speech so fraught with peril to your life," saying which she gave him her hand as if in friendship and protection. "Be not too much cast down, but go about your business as if nothing troubled you. Come hither, Prince," she went on, turning to Amyntas, "I leave you in Pausanias' charge. He will see that you lack no attention or honor in our power to bestow. Afterwards, Pausanias, proclaim the names of the stricken throughout the city, that the agony of those who wait may not be needlessly prolonged," and inclining her head, the Queen entered the citadel, followed by her attendants.

"So the enchantress Cleopatra shot her bolt at you, ere she let it fly at Alexander, and now more successfully against the King," Amyntas cried when they were alone. "I thought you were wiser than to be caught by the shallow wanton."

"The shallow wanton! By the Gods you shall answer with your life for so foul a word," Pausanias cried, white with rage, drawing his sword.

"Nay, forgive me. I did not dream you were so tender," Amyntas responded, backing away.

"I care not what you dreamed. Draw, or I will kill you. Quick! The craze is on me," Pausanias exclaimed, convulsed with rage, extending his weapon. Drawing his sword, Amyntas cried out as he parried the other's furious thrust: "Calm yourself, Pausanias. Put by your weapon, for I meant not to offend you."

"I care not what you meant," Pausanias cried, striving to run him through.

"Are you mad, you fool?" Amyntas exclaimed, angered at the other's pertinacity.

"Yes, mad, mad, mad!" Pausanias answered, rushing on Amyntas with extended sword, his eyes half closed with the frenzy that possessed him.

Seeing this Amyntas, raising his weapon, struck Pausanias' sword from his trembling hand, exclaiming:

"Quiet your mad rage, Pausanias. Go! Pick up your sword, for I would not harm you if I could."

"I will accept naught from you. I would have killed you, and you can do no less for me," Pausanias cried, throwing wide his arms and rushing upon the point of Amyntas' sword. But the latter, letting it fall, clasped Pausanias in his arms, crying out:

"Why die like a coward, my friend, and let the King who wrongs you go free?"

"You are right, Amyntas," Pausanias sobbed at length, his head on the other's shoulder. "It is he I should slay, not you. For it is his importunities that have overcome her virtue. I will live, if only to avenge myself and those who, like me, have suffered from his brutish passions. There! Say not a word, lest I go mad," and picking up his sword he hurried from the fortress.

"Go, weak man! I could not ask fitter instrument,"

Amyntas exclaimed, sheathing his sword and following Pausanias.

Thus, through the pride and jealousy of the outraged Queen and the despair of those Philip had wronged, was the first step taken that was destined to lead to such vast consequences to the world and the war-like King of Macedonia.

Seeking her apartments much disturbed, the distraught Queen found her favorite, a gentle maid, lying prostrate on the floor convulsed with grief.

"Why do you weep, sweet child?" she asked, lifting her up with tender compassion. "Hath word reached you of some friend, perhaps a lover, fallen in battle? I thought the hearts of our women steeled against such tidings; it is a tale so often told."

"I weep not for one lost in battle, oh Queen. For that is the fate of men. But for Orestes, cruelly murdered," the girl sorrowfully answered.

"Murdered! Orestes, your brother? By whom and when?" the Queen cried, surprised and grieved.

"By Amyntas as he approached the city scarce an hour since," the maid answered, overcome by grief.

"By Amyntas! What grudge has he against the gentle youth? Surely you must be mistaken," the Queen exclaimed, striving to soothe her.

"No, gracious Queen, I have it from one who witnessed the horrid deed. Nor was he stricken down in fair fight, but treacherously, in the open road and before all the troop," she answered, anger overcoming her grief.

"Amyntas was ever cold and cruel, but I cannot think him capable of so foul a deed," the Queen answered, and calling a page she bade him seek out the officer of Amyntas' escort and bring him to her without delay. "There

are other things beside this that I would learn from lips less pliant than those of the fawning Prince," she went on as her attendants removed her cloak and hat. "Why said he naught of the deed to me? Oh, he presumes too much on his high birth, and Philip's weak compassion. Were I King he should not live an hour to threaten the throne and Alexander's peaceful succession!"

While thus meditating her heart filled with apprehension and hate her messenger returned accompanied by Clitus, whom he had found dismounting at the outer gate of the fortress.

"Welcome back to Pella, good Clitus, and with no new wounds, I hope, to attest your devotion to the King and his august son, the Prince," she cried, giving her hand in love to the hardy soldier.

"Not so much as a scratch, please you gracious Queen," Clitus answered, dropping on one knee and raising her hand to his lips.

"You are tired and worn from the long march, and I am wrong to claim your presence ere you have refreshed yourself."

"The favor of our Queen is both meat and sleep to those who serve her," Clitus answered gallantly, rising to his feet.

"Ah, Clitus, I fear our soft spoken courtiers are corrupting your honest speech. But come! Refresh yourself with wine and seat yourself beside me, for your devotion deserves no less favor," she exclaimed, motioning her attendants to retire as Clitus took the proffered place. "Come now, let us talk, and not as Queen and subject, but as one good friend to another. But first drink this refreshing wine. It is the elixir of your country, and in it we will pledge the King and after him the Prince."

"To both, together and apart, now and always!" Clitus exclaimed, rising and draining the deep goblet without taking it from his lips.

"Come! Another cup, Clitus. That did but wash the dust from your hot throat, for you have traveled far and hard, as your stained armor shows. Nay, you shall not have less than the King's portion," she went on, filling his goblet afresh, "for Philip, when wearied, will not stay with less than a full skin of wine; nor always that."

"The great bull's horn, from which we drank when I was young, has lost much in size these years, oh Queen," Clitus exclaimed, emptying the brimming cup as he had done the other.

Filling the goblet anew she cried, resting her hand on Clitus' arm:

"Now that you are refreshed, tell me, good friend, what mean these stories flying about the court of Orestes' quick and cruel death at Amyntas' hand?"

"What would you have me say, oh Queen?"

"I would have you answer truly, as 'tis in your heart to do."

"I dare not, oh Queen," Clitus answered, fidgeting in his seat.

"Dare not! When I, your Queen, bid you speak?"

"He is so high in favor, gracious Queen, and the King punishes all who say aught against him."

"But I, the Queen, Alexander's mother, Philip's wife, bid you speak."

"Let Amyntas be interrogated, oh Queen. It is not fit that I should meddle in the matter."

"Speak! I command you," the Queen answered in an imperious voice. "If aught follow I will bear the blame."

"'Tis true then, oh gracious Queen," Clitus, who only waited to be thus urged, answered. "Orestes was stricken as you say and by Amyntas' hand."

"What excuse did he give, if any, for the foul deed?"

"That Orestes was a traitor, oh Queen, and had spoken foully of both the King and Prince."

"That cannot be, for the Prince writes me concerning the youth and in the most friendly spirit," the Queen answered in surprise. "Did not Orestes say aught before he died? Speak! You shall conceal no part of the horrid deed!"

"Reviving after the cruel stroke, the youth excused Amyntas, saying he did it in the heat of passion. But in the same breath spoke of the King and Prince with tender love, bidding me watch over them as if some great danger threatened. Oh, he was basely stricken and without cause, gracious Queen," Clitus cried, his anger rising at remembrance of the deed. "Or, if cause there was, it concerned Amyntas and not Orestes."

"I can well believe it; and was he struck down without warning?"

"Yes, for lightning could not have been more sudden or startling as we looked on, thinking no harm."

"The stroke was not to punish, Clitus, but more likely to hide the treason of him who gave it," the Queen exclaimed.

"It appeared as if given in a passion to satiate the rage that filled Amyntas' heart. This I gathered, too, from Orestes' excuse of the act."

"And he bade you when dying to look to the King's and Alexander's safety?" the Queen continued, reflecting on what the other had said.

"Yes, and with such beseeching eyes and tremor of

voice that I must believe he thought some great danger threatened them."

"I would to the Gods it were true in Philip's case, Clitus, and that the blow might not be long delayed. But 'tis a useless waste of breath, for he hath a charmed life, otherwise he had long since been killed by those he has betrayed," she answered angrily. "'Tis for Alexander I fear, Clitus. For like Philip, he is indifferent to danger, shrugging his shoulders with disdainful pride if one but mention such a thing."

"That is true. Both the King and Prince contemplate danger as the eagle looks upon the black clouds that gather far beneath him. But 'tis a manly disdain, and such as becomes soldiers and kings," Clitus exclaimed with pride.

"Thus every King of Macedonia has scorned the dangers that surrounded him, and so not one has died this hundred years without suspicion of grievous wrong."

"Nor would precaution have availed them. For 'tis the fate of those whose heads overtop the others. The lightning strikes not the worm that crawls on the ground," Clitus answered sententiously.

"You know not how I fear for Alexander's life," she answered anxiously. "And now, more than before, I would that you were near him, Clitus, with a stout troop of horse."

"I would I were, sweet Queen, for here I am entombed like a rat, not having even a bone to gnaw."

"Have you no orders from the King? Nothing that would prevent your rejoining the Prince if I gave the order?" the Queen exclaimed, her eyes lighting up.

"None, oh Queen, and if you but say the word I will be abroad ere daylight."

"Could you find him, if he had set out on his return to Pella, do you think?"

"With my eyes shut, oh Queen, for the road he must take a blind man might follow."

"And could you start tonight, or were you merely boasting?" the Queen went on, her voice plainly beseeching him to confirm his speech.

"Yes, and ere the moon has risen, oh Queen. For I would not wish the direction of our march known lest a trap be set and we fall into it unawares, as Orestes did."

"Well, then, tonight let it be," the Queen cried, laying her hand on his. "But take only approved men, Clitus—Eumenes, Ptolemy, Hephestion, Seleucus, Antigonus and the others. No one not known to be Alexander's firm friend. But hasten, sparing neither man nor beast. When you have found the sweet Prince, let your excuse be for coming, that I wished to send him greeting and love. He need know nothing of your errand, lest he refuse the proffer and send you to join the King."

"Nay, he would not do that for friendship's sake, for to all you have named he has shown kindness and preference."

"I know, and I could not send him a more acceptable present than these companions whom he loves," she cried, her face lighting up at the thought of thus assuring the Prince's safety.

"I will not fail in reporting your kind speech to those you have named, nor lose time in setting out," Clitus answered rising to take his leave. But the Queen staying him with her hand, exclaimed:

"Conceal naught from him concerning Orestes' fate, nor the cause of it. Tell him his mother, who loves him, bids him beware of Amyntas and his friends. Oh, the

very air is charged with murder, Clitus, and the coming of the Persian envoys, with their bags of gold bodes no good to the King and Prince," the Queen exclaimed bowing her head, overcome by fear. "You see how I am broken, Clitus. Tomorrow I shall have regained my courage; but tonight I tremble for my son, so fair and strong, and so tender of his afflicted mother. For he does love me, who suckled him at this breast now so full of sorrow; and as he grew in years nursed him when sick, encouraged him, loved him and trusted him. My happiness wrecked, all my life centered in him. But it was not always so, Clitus. I was happy when I was young and Philip obscure and poor. Then we were lovers, lovers, Clitus! But with growing power, men flattered him and encouraged him to sin and women sought him as the slimy leech seeks the breast that is full of healthful blood. Thus his love died and I, who was once trustful and loving, became, as the concubines and wives swarmed about me, like a wild beast. They call me 'The Tigress,' and truly enough. I should have had a colder heart. You knew me as I was, Clitus. The blood of my youth, its strength and aspirations animate my son. He is not like Philip. Ye Gods, spare him to me! My every feature is reproduced in him and if he becomes great, Clitus, then he will owe it all to me. The mother is ever thus reproduced. The father is naught. Look on Alexander, Clitus, and on Philip's other son, the imbecile! All Philip's strength comes from his mother. His father, Amyntas fled his kingdom, offering to barter a part, that he might regain what was left. Eurydice, Philip's mother, was of different mold, strong and resolute, not hesitating in after days to hurl her son, Perdiccas from the throne when he crossed her masterful purpose. It is from this mighty

Queen that Philip owes his genius and cunning, for you see, Clitus, I do not deny Philip greatness though I hate him," she exclaimed sadly.

"If men derive strength from their mother, what may we not hope of Alexander, oh Queen, where father and mother are both great," Clitus interposed contemplatively.

"Philip, not less than I, has ever sought to build in Alexander everything that is wise and great. Till now he has had naught to fear, but when at Cheronea he broke the Theban ranks, outdoing his father, the coming ruler, the King of men, stood revealed to all the world. Now, through fear and hatred, those who have been pacified will seek his life. And among them most of all Amyntas. Philip, too, will become estranged through his intrigue with Cleopatra. Then the pampered Princes who haunt the corridors of the court like famished wolves will seek to strike him down. And Alexander, fearing naught, will tread the dangerous path with open visor and uncovered breast. Lanike, your sister, loved him, Clitus. She was his nurse, trusted as myself. And you, Clitus! he looked upon as a second Achilles. You are bound to him by every tie, and he to you. Hasten to him then, and shield him with your strength and cunning. Not from open enemies. For these I care not. But from the assassins who hide their weapons beneath the cloak of friendship."

And clasping both her arms about Clitus' neck as if to bind him to her son forever, she sorrowfully dismissed him.

CHAPTER IV.

ALEXANDER AND ROXANA.

Beneath the spreading oaks that clothed the foothills of the Othrys mountains, a detachment of mounted troops, followed by pack-animals and slaves, was leisurely making its way toward the Thessalian plain, glimpses of which might be seen through the opening trees. The leader, bestriding his horse with easy grace, rode amidst a group of officers and pages in brilliant uniforms, seemingly unconscious of their presence. And it was apparent, from their unconstrained manner and speech, that all distinctions of rank were, for the moment, forgotten in the fullness of life and the romantic nature of the country through which they were passing.

"'Tis said," one of them at last exclaimed, in answer to the speech of a companion, "that the Princess Roxana goes to Pella with her father, Oxyartes, chief of the Persian embassy. Did you hear aught of her while in Athens?"

"Yes, and this among other things; that her beauty is so resplendent and her manner so captivating that the most insensible yield their hearts to her without a struggle," Hephestion, the young cavalry officer addressed, answered.

"That is a fiction not worth repeating, for every one knows that no Persian woman, however obscure, uncovers her face before the world," Seleucus, one of his companions, answered amid a general laugh.

"But the Princess is only half a Persian, for she comes from the far distant province of Bactria, where the customs of the Persian court have little force. Or, if they do, the dainty being, like our Grecian dames, will by no means suffer the splendor of her beauty to be clouded by a veil."

"Will she accompany the embassy to Pella, think you?" Ptolemy, a young officer of distinguished bearing, asked.

"Yes, for she and her father are said to be inseparable. Indeed, it is whispered among the wise in Athens that much of his diplomatic skill is due to her tact and happy suggestions."

"Who among us has seen the fair enchantress?" Seleucus, an officer of cavalry, asked, looking around. "I heard that the embassy kept under cover on their ships while waiting to see whether Philip or Demosthenes would come off victor."

"No Macedonian has ever beheld her," Hephestion replied. "But her great beauty and queenly bearing are the only things talked of among the scented dandies of Athens."

"What know they of her beauty except from hearsay, if she were hid on board the Persian ships?" Eumenes, a veteran officer, cried in derision.

"The embassy passed a week in Athens on its arrival; but straightway they heard of the presence of the King's threatening army in Phocis, then, Persian-like, they hid themselves on board their ships; and this to the utter undoing of the Athenian dandies, for they aver that one never tires of gazing on the Princess' eyebrows; and that beneath the resplendent arches, every eye-lash has such

witching charm that all speech is lost in contemplating its downward sweep," Hephestion exclaimed.

"What of her eyes, Hephestion?" Nearchus, one of the group, cried.

"They have such depth and enchantment of life that only the deep blue of the unfathomable sea can be compared to them in beauty and liquid splendor."

"And her mouth, romancer?" Antigonus, an elderly officer, exclaimed.

"Its sweetness and dainty upward curve, sure signs of amiability and goodness of heart, surpasses all others in loveliness, as do her eyes."

"By the Gods, Hephestion, the idlers of Athens are not lacking in imagination if they have no courage or enterprise in arms," Ptolemy cried, captivated by the picture.

"Oh, I have not recounted the half," Hephestion went on. "For still more wonderful stories are told of her by the Persian sailors. It was told me by Æschines, that with bow and arrow she can split a pomegranate at fifty paces, and with the javelin is as skillful as a Cretan soldier. He said, too, that being with her father in a skirmish with the Scythian nomads, and Oxyartes being wounded, she supported him on his horse, and so both escaped from the field; until, gaining a safe distance, she bound up his wounds and continued the flight."

"An Amazon!" Seleucus ejaculated.

"No; a woman of such gentle texture that she cries out if you but cut your finger. But in battle a lioness, the Persians aver, if her father be threatened."

"Does the embassy take ship to Pella, or go by land?" Antigonus asked. "For by the Gods, had I such a daugh-

ter as this Roxana, I would not travel abroad in Greece without an army to guard her; not I."

"They go by land, the better to spy out the country, 'tis thought," Eumenes answered. "And this at the suggestion of Mithrines, a renegade Greek in the Persian service, and now Governor of Sardis."

"I heard him spoken of as a man much esteemed by the great King for his cunning and unscrupulous services," Antigonus interposed.

"The Persian Kings have ever had use for such agents at Athens and among the Asiatic Greeks; but now, Philip being completely victorious, the jackals will hereafter seek their prey at Pella," Seleucus exclaimed with scornful wrath.

"Nor will they come empty-handed, but with the vast treasures the Athenian wasp, Demosthenes, would have handled had Philip lost at Cheronea; but such thing not happening, straightway the gold of the great King was locked up to be transferred to Pella," Antigonus answered.

"It would appear then that the embassy has two treasures, Roxana and Darius' bags of shining gold," Nearchus exclaimed.

"If the Princess be all they say, Oxyartes, her father, must be the most favored of mortals," Cassander, a young officer, hitherto silent, exclaimed with warmth.

"Yes. Nor is that all; for he is little less than a King in his own country, and of such fabulous wealth that even Darius envies him his riches," Antigonus answered.

"Ye Gods, but Persia's conquest will afford our Macedonian soldiers rich plunder if all that is told, or the half, be true. May we all be there when the goose is plucked,"

Seleucus cried, referring to the projected invasion of that mighty empire.

"'Tis time. For till now our campaigns have yielded little but scars, and slaves hardly worth the holding, if I except the fat cities of Chalcidice," Ptolemy exclaimed, scanning his battered armor.

"'Twill be different in Babylon and Susa when our swords are loosened in their crowded streets," Seleucus answered with animation.

"'Tis said the gold of Crœsus, taken by great Cyrus when Sardis fell two hundred years ago, is still uncounted in Susa's treasury."

"Of wine, too, of fabulous age and richness, there is claimed to be no end," Ptolemy interposed, wetting his lips.

"I would I had a sip of it to slake my thirst, for these mountains and plains are as dry as Lysimachus' stories," Cassander exclaimed.

"'Twill be rich picking, this Persia, and salve many an ugly wound," Ptolemy answered with a laugh.

"Peace, good friends!" Alexander, who commanded the detachment of troops, here interposed in a voice singularly low and sweet. "If the King's wars have yielded little to enrich you, they have made Macedonia the head of all Greece, and so of the world. Is that not enough for a beginning? The other he will compass, and that before some of you have grown a beard."

"If he conquer Persia, what will there be left for you when you succeed him on the throne?" Hephestion exclaimed, jealous of his friend's fame.

"'Tis a big world, Hephestion, and we know little of

its bounds, save what we hear from the gossip, Herodotus, and other travelers," Alexander answered mildly.

"But the King will have explored and conquered its utmost limits ere he die, and thus all the glory will be his," rejoined Hephestion, no way appeased.

"If so, it is his of right, good friend," Alexander answered. "For was it not he who fashioned our invincible army and plucked our country from the depths of poverty, to make it the greatest among nations? If he achieves the conquest of Persia it is not too great a reward for services so glorious," he went on, to the surprise of those who listened, for the boundless ambition of the young Prince was a thing well known.

Proceeding some distance without further speech, Alexander at last reined in his horse, crying to those about him:

"Come, sweet friends, we are but a step from the great plain. Let the soldiers dismount and don their armor. 'Tis a compliment due to our ally, the Tagus of Thessaly, and a thing we owe to the heroic dead who once traversed this war-worn plain."

" 'Twill serve the better to spread the news of our approach, and so the Tagus may show us some hospitality when we reach Larissa," Ptolemy exclaimed, smacking his lips as if already enjoying the feast.

"Nay, that I would avoid, and all other like demonstrations on our way," the Prince exclaimed. "And the better to insure this let it not be said that I accompany the detachment, but rather that some un-named Prince of Macedonia is in command. Look to this, Antigonus," Alexander went on, as he dismounted and gave his plumed hat and cloak to a waiting page.

Alexander, the young Prince, who was so soon to shake the earth with the thunder of his battalions, was then at the beginning of his heroic career. But so great was the mould in which he was cast and so transcendent his talent and high his courage and aspirations, that already he was the hope of his country, as he was the terror of its numerous enemies.

Putting aside the soft garments he wore, for the more cumbrous habiliments of war, the Prince's form displayed in its graceful outlines all the sinewy strength and suppleness of the trained soldier. Of full height, his bearing was that of one accustomed to command, and to the conferring of distinction and honor upon those about him. His countenance was amiable and pleasing, blending with the comely fullness of youth, outlines that would later in life display the strength that only the great of heart and mind possess. His full lips, while indicating a vehement temper showed also the qualities that cause men to love those about them and put trust in their affection and loyalty. The soft tint of youth and health that overspread his cheeks, gave to his countenance an air peculiarly attractive to both men and women. His blue eyes were mild and reflective, but when animated by pleasurable emotions, assumed a sparkling radiance. In repose they had about them the steadfast, unwavering look possessed by men whose state constrains them to listen seriously and ponder deeply on what they see and hear. But in their hidden depths those who observed might discern the latent fire that, on the battlefield or in the strife of men, blazed forth with a flame so fateful to those he opposed. His nose, which above all other things indicates the hidden secrets of men, was prominent above every other

feature, giving to his face an air of commanding majesty and force; a force, it may be truly said, that nothing could tire or divert. His forehead, full at the base, sharply receded to be lost in the wilderness of yellow hair that curled upward and backward in divergent masses over his shapely head, like the waving mane of an aroused lion.

As a man the mighty Prince had many of the weaknesses and passions common to men of our own day. But singularly enough for a Macedonian Prince of that elastic age, he revered women both in thought and act, believing unreservedly in their purity and truthfulness. Differing from Philip in this respect his abstinence has been attributed to his great pride and towering ambition. Whatever may have been the cause it is certain that his life in this regard was the most noted and free from criticism of all the great men the world has ever known. A man of open heart and lavish generosity he had, withal, such contrasts of amiability and fierce ungovernable temper that neither those who knew him nor those who have come after, have been able to fathom these strange contradictions of his remarkable character. At his ease, Alexander's countenance was singularly attractive, but when stirred by passion or the strife of battle, his eyes became fixed and clothed with such somber depths and hostile will that no one could look upon them unmoved. Thus stirred, his lips, usually so amiable and persuasive, scarce showed their edge; and his chin, firmer and more prominent than most men's, grew rigid with the intensity of his passion. At such times his face, before enriched with color, became white and tense, his brows contracting and pushing forward as if to form a cover for the eyes that gleamed beneath. This great

Prince, unlike his father, despised artifice or indirection, preferring ever to attack and overcome his enemies in the open field. "I will steal no victory," was his historic reply when counseled to make a night attack on Darius at Arbela where the supremacy of the world was to be determined by the impending battle. In his private relations with men and women, Alexander was amiable, trustful and loyal; but in grave affairs of state imperious and all-conquering. Of his chivalrous and lion-like courage his whole life bears evidence. Without fear, no danger daunted him, no risk appalled him. Yet there is no instance throughout his life of any needed precaution, however trivial, being neglected if necessary to secure the success of his arms. In his many campaigns and sieges his plans were carefully formulated, and this having been done, no obstacle was allowed to prevent their attainment. Such was the character and attainments of this great and most chivalrous of Princes.

Alexander's armor which he now donned, was no wise different from that of his companions, except that it was more richly inlaid with gold and precious jewels. Underneath the jointed cuirass of iron that protected his arms and body he wore a suit of soft doe-skin, his hands being encased in steel-plated gauntlets, richly embossed. A broad baldric, embroidered in silk and fastened at the waist by a stout belt, supported his straight, two-edged sword of Damascus steel. Untanned boots of deer-skin, laced high in front, covered his feet and over these and about his lower limbs grooved anklets of iron served as a further protection. A gorget of mail, richly jeweled, composed of scale armor of tempered steel, protected his neck and throat. Above this a glistening helmet of iron,

inlaid with brass, served as a cover and protection to his head. Hinged to this, and projecting from his forehead, a visor completely covered and protected his face. From out his shining helmet, on either side, there protruded a towering plume of milk-white ostrich feathers; and these, in the turmoil and stress of battle, like his glistening buckler, ever marked his presence and cheered his followers to victory. In complement to the iron-clad rider, scale armor protected the front and flanks of Alexander's horse, Bucephalus, worthy companion of so great and war-like a Prince. Such was Alexander the Great as, having donned his armor, he sprang with graceful ease on the back of his spirited steed.

Apart, and some paces in the rear of the Prince, Clitus followed on. Riding hard, night and day, he had joined Alexander at Athens, and now being at his ease he bestrode his horse contentedly, adjusting its pace to the movements of those in advance. By his side rode an aged man, who, while he wore a helmet and gauntlets of steel with an affected air, looked, from his gaunt form and pinched face, what he was—a pedagogue rather than a soldier. But if Lysimachus, for such was his name, might not vie with Clitus in deeds of valor, he was more than a match for that doughty soldier in fluency of speech and fervency of imagination.

"See!" he exclaimed, as Alexander halted on an eminence to view the distant plains of Thessaly, "the Prince, like a good soldier and a lover of the Gods, stops to look upon the plain made sacred by the glory of the heroes who have traversed it in ages gone. For here you must know, good Clitus, within the compass of our sight all

the demigods of Greece have passed in their glorious majesty," he concluded with a sniffle of satisfaction.

"Let the Prince look and dream, oh Lysimachus, but what has he, whom no one equals in arms, to learn from the shades of the dead, however mighty?" Clitus answered, turning away as if seeing little in the subject to interest him.

"Over yonder verdant plain," the old man went on, not noticing Clitus' tone or manner, "Achilles pursued his foe, and on that distant height his citadel reared its lofty battlements. Where we look, Phœnix taught him, as a youth, how to guide his steeds and, afterwards, in predatory strife, the problems of the Trojan war," the old man sighed, puckering his lips, as if much of what he said was due to his telling.

"Yours is an oft-told tale, old man. Wait till the Prince has traversed this plain with a Macedonian army and you will have something worth the telling," Clitus answered, little dreaming that in the near future Alexander, hurrying from the Illyrian mountains, would cross this historic field, carrying such terror and destruction to revolting Thebes as never before or afterwards befell a Grecian city.

"Oh you have no more sentiment than a pig, Clitus," the old man replied impatiently, holding up his withered hand. "Hark! Can you not hear in the moaning wind and sighing trees the far-resounding hoofs of horsemen, the clang of armor and the cries of dying men, as they rise to heaven from the ensanguined plain?"

"Nay. I hear nothing save rustling leaves and the croaking of frogs in yonder pool," Clitus answered, making believe he listened. "Did Adam and Eve consort

here, think you, good Lysimachus?" he went on derisively. "Methinks I see the tree from which she plucked the forbidden apple to tempt her unstable spouse."

"Alas! these echoing mountains will never more resound with the glorious achievements of the mighty past. We must be content to recount Achilles' deeds, nor hope to equal them," Lysimachus went on, touching his helmet as if it were an ornament merely.

"Bah! Ever prating of Achilles! I'm sick of the very name. A laggard; a pouting boy, old man. Our Prince sends not his friends to death but leads the way with flaming sword," Clitus answered, snapping his fingers in the air. "What has been done in the past, prating old man, is as the pucker of one's mouth to the whirl of battles yet to come."

"Across yonder silent plain," Lysimachus went on, as if he had not heard, "Xerxes' myriad host in panoply of war proudly entered Greece, only later, in mad haste, to clog its mountain passes with their dead as they fled, disheartened from the pursuing Greeks."

"Xerxes, himself, being well in advance, oh Lysimachus, like the prudent man he was," Clitus interposed.

"From yonder harbor, scarce discernible, Jason, with the brave Argonauts, set sail in search of the Golden Fleece. From those beetling cliffs, which you can plainly see, Hercules and Perseus met their death; and but a step away, such is the story, brave Pelopidas fell, pursuing the tyrant Jason amid the bristling pikes and gleaming swords of his distracted army," Lysimachus went on, as his worn eyes scanned the distant horizon.

"Therein showing himself to be a foolish ass, Lysimachus. For it is no part of wisdom for a general to

avenge his private wrongs on the field of battle. Thus, too, the younger Cyrus lost his life and Persia's golden crown. Our Prince will have more sense."

"Nay, he will pass like a shadow doing nothing. For Philip will have garnered all the wheat ere he grasps the sickle."

"Bah! The King is but plowing the ground about the homestead for Alexander to sow; and going far, fill the annals of all the world with the splendor of his exploits."

"Ye Gods, if that be true and it be told that I, Lysimachus, taught him, as Phœnix taught the mighty Achilles!"

"It will be told of you, old man, that you loved and flattered him, but that he was taught strength and wisdom by the princely Leonidas and Aristotle, the plodding pedagogue.

"I not less, Clitus, and if I sought to throw some sunlight across his rugged path what was the harm?" Lysimachus answered resentfully.

"Therein you did well, old man, for he should have been taught more follies in his youth, Leonidas was too serious. He thought only of Alexander's body and a soldier's calling. Bah! the Prince should have been taught to love and take pleasure in parading his horse before the fine ladies of the court! They were far better company than the book-worm Aristotle, or the crabbed Leonidas. Our Prince is too old, too old, Lysimachus, too old for so young a man," Clitus exclaimed in disgust.

"'Tis the burden he bears, not his training, good Clitus, that gives him the air of being old. Sorrow is ever the heritage of those who rule the savage men and women of

Macedonia, or watch the still more savage people upon its borders. When every cup may poison and every cloud of smoke foretell the invasion of a savage foe, can one expect our rulers to look otherwise? It is these sombre shadows, Clitus, that lead Philip, the King, to seek in wine and the companionship of bibbers and lewd women, forgetfulness and oblivion. Alexander is old while yet young, and his laughter rings with the sombre thoughts of men who have much to expect and more to fear. Were he a simple man and not a Prince, he would be a poet and student, for thus his mind inclines."

" 'Tis in that way you think of him, say what you will, Lysimachus, though you call him Achilles to his face in fulsome flattery."

"You think of him, Clitus, only as a warrior, born to cut and hew men, and therein do him grievous wrong."

"What else is there worthy of him, old man? That is the serious business of our age. Study is but a means of expanding the minds of men that they may be more fit to command. You should have seen your poet and scholar at Cheronea when, snatching a bugle from a waiting soldier, he sounded the charge, leading it afterwards with headlong fury full upon the Sacred Band," Clitus cried, turning away and leaving the old man to his reflections.*

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*In excuse of Lysimachus' pertinacity, it is to be said that about no other spot in the world does there cluster so many memories of the heroic men of antiquity as about the Thessalian plain upon which he gazed.

CHAPTER V.

THE THEBAN AMBUSCADE.

Immediately behind the Prince and the officers and pages who surrounded him in glittering armor, a squadron of the Companion Cavalry followed in orderly array. The invincible corps to which this body of men belonged was made up wholly of nobles and their sons and the more opulent landed proprietors of Macedonia and the countries under its sway. Armed with long sword, shield and lance, oftentimes with javelin, the Companion Cavalry was the most formidable body of armed men known to the ancient world. Their defensive armor was the same as that of the Prince, the front and flanks of their horses being also protected by scale armor. Each member of this renowned troop, like the knights of medieval days, was attended by a squire and one or more slaves whose duty it was to carry the weapons and armor of the Companion and attend to his horse and baggage. Back of this troop in the center of the column, the pack-animals in charge of slaves, were marshaled. Still further on a body of light Thracian cavalry followed. These were armed with spear and shield, their horses having no defensive armor of any kind. Still other troops made up of bowmen, darters and slingers brought up the rear. These were followed by a motley crowd of soldiers and mercenaries, whose time of service having expired, now sought the cover of Alexander's arms to regain their homes. Mingling with them were vagrant minstrels, con-

jurers, acrobats and strolling players, the mongrel riff-raff that ever attached itself to the movement of armies in ancient times. These, because of their appetite and unappeasable thirst, Clitus aptly called the "Hungry Horde."

Reaching the edge of the forest Alexander halted to again survey the extended view before descending into the open plain.

"By the beard of Cyclops," Clitus exclaimed impatiently from the rear, "night will overtake us ere we find a fit place to camp."

"What place could you find more fit than this?" Lysimachus answered, viewing the extended landscape with tranquil unconcern.

"For you, none, old man; but for horses and men, water as well as a bed is needed," Clitus muttered in bad humor. "But what's in the wind!" he went on, starting up. "See, the young war-dogs scatter as if a battle were impending and the troops to be rallied to a charge!" and hurrying forward he quickly reached the side of the Prince.

"You are in good time, Clitus. What make you of yonder body of men hidden from the highway behind the grove of olive trees and ascending ground?" the Prince exclaimed, pointng to a dark object a mile away.

"By the eye of Cyclops, 'tis a body of cavalry, oh Prince, and heavily armed! See the glint of their lances and the headgear of the horses in the falling sunlight."

"They stand at arms and in close array, their spears projecting as if awaiting a signal to charge. 'Tis an ambuscade, Clitus, and planned for our undoing had we

descended by the beaten road," Alexander exclaimed, scanning the distant body.

"But from whence come they, oh Prince? For there is not an armed man in all northern Greece save those in the King's service."

"They are not men, but the somber shades of those who have fallen in battle, come back to array themselves again in the panoply of war," Lysimachus here interposed with quavering voice.

"They are neither shades nor Macedonians, gentle master," Alexander answered, smiling amiably on the old man, "but Theban soldiers as you may see, who, fleeing from Cheronea, are marshaled anew to give us battle. 'Tis a brave thought, Clitus, and it shall not be said that we declined the challenge," and turning to Eumenes, who remained near him, he cried: "Hasten to Nearchus and the others and bid them lose no time in bringing the troops forward marshaled for battle."

"We shall need them all if my eyes have not weakened with age," Clitus interposed, scanning the distant enemy.

"How many do they number, think you?" the Prince asked, turning his attention anew to the Theban troop.

"Twenty lochus of sixteen men each, and not a man missing, oh Prince."

"Thrice our number. But the more glory, Clitus, if we conquer."

"I would they were twice as many," Clitus cried with savage energy.

"Do not despise an enemy ere you strike a blow, good friend. And that we may do no foolish thing, Clitus, take

the Thracian horse and, keeping in the shadow of the trees, descend into the plain by the beaten road."

"Yes, oh Prince."

"When the Thebans charge fall back as if afraid, and as they follow in pursuit we will attack them on the flank."

"And so destroy them! A sweet trap and much to my liking save the order to retreat."

"'Twill be for a moment only. When we charge you will wheel about from yonder rising ground," he went on, turning to point out the spot.

"But see, Clitus!" he cried after a moment, surprised, "what body of men is that emerging from the cover of the trees, where you were to have made the sally? Are they phantoms, as Lysimachus will aver, or flesh and blood?"

"'Tis a band of mountebanks and strolling players, journeying to Pella, to gather the wealth of our returning soldiers," Clitus exclaimed disdainfully.

"No! Actors do not travel in such state in these war-worn days, but obscurely and afoot, or on half-starved asses."

"'Tis the remnant of Xerxes' host and nothing else," Lysimachus interposed anew, his face blanched with superstitious fear. "See you not the lumbering camels and Persian horsemen with prancing steeds and waving plumes? Stir not for your life, sweet Prince, for the plain swarms with the shades of those long dead against whom your arms will avail nothing."

"They are no more the shades of men than the others, gentle Lysimachus," Alexander answered, his face bright-

ening. "But the Persian embassy on its way to Pella. And 'tis for them the Theban ambush is planned—not us," he went on, noting the brilliant dress of the Persian horsemen.

"Yes, and see! The outlaws prepare to charge," Clitus cried, as the peaceful cavalcade neared the grove of olive trees.

"And doing so will beat down the Persian defense as leaves are scattered by the wind," Alexander cried with angry voice.

"Look! the gallant band at last discovers the trap and group their animals to form a defense. But 'twill be a useless labor. Eye of Cyclops! See, oh Prince, the craven escort already turn and fly. For shame, for shame!" Clitus screamed.

To this outcry Alexander made no reply, but wheeling about and facing his waiting troops, cried with impassioned voice:

"A band of Theban outlaws from Cheronea attack the Persian embassy, a peaceful company on its way to Pella! To the rescue, soldiers, in the King's name!" And lifting his spear as a signal to charge he turned his horse, and driving deep his spurs, shot like an arrow into the open plain. The waiting troops, cheering the Prince with one voice, responded with eagerness to his command, following fast behind amid the blare of trumpets and the clang of armor on horse and man.

"Hold, oh Prince! Nor charge in advance of the Companions," Clitus cried amid the thunder of the horses' hoofs, spurring to keep pace with his master. "'Twould be a foolish thing to be killed by a Theban renegade!"

But the Prince, making no answer, kept on his way, his war horse, as if scenting the battle, increasing his speed with every stride. And soon all were left behind save Clitus, who, better mounted than the others, and urging his horse to the utmost, kept near his master.

Making such defense as their small number permitted the Persian noblemen faced their enemies with courageous front. But unavailingly, for the Thebans swarming about them on every side, quickly beat down their swords and so had them at their mercy. But further than this they did them no harm, designing, it was apparent, to hold them captives for ransom or, this not forthcoming, for such punishment as Theban cruelty could devise. The Persian nobles disarmed and put aside, the robbers lost no time in securing the frightened animals and the precious treasure they bore. Occupied in this way, amidst frightful cries and the clash of armor and neighing of horses, Alexander's approach was unnoticed by the Thebans until he was full upon them. Casting aside his spear as a useless weapon where so many were opposed, he drew his sword and charged the disorganized Theban band at topmost speed, with the cry, "For the King." Trampling or cutting down all who stood in his path, and as a ship forces its way through the foaming waves, he reached the center of the throng, his plume waving high above those about him, and serving as a guide to Clitus and those who followed.

Reaching the trembling dromedaries, he cleared a space with his long and sweeping blade, and doing so, cut down a stalwart Theban who sought to tear apart the silken canopy that surmounted the back of one of the frightened

animals. As the Theban fell, a woman's delicate hand parted the curtain and Alexander saw, not heaped up treasures, but a face of resplendent beauty in whose agitated features despair and fixed resolve were clearly shown. Beholding Alexander, and near him the stricken Theban, her face lighted, and holding out her arms in loving impulse, a poniard, that she grasped, dropped to the ground.

Not long he gazed, for the Theban outlaws, overcoming their quick surprise, rained blow upon blow on his steel-clad armor. Turning and using the cowering dromedary as a shield, he parried with buckler and sword the thrusts that sought from every direction to put an end to his life. While thus beset, a Theban, watching his chance and coming up behind, raised his ponderous blade to cleave the Prince's skull. But Clitus, forcing his way to Alexander's side with ponderous blows, observing the outlaw's action, caught the descending blade upon his own. Raising his weapon in return he severed the robber's uplifted arm, the unused weapon falling to the ground still grasped in the stiffened hand.

"You did the like for me at Cheronea," Clitus cried with cheerful gallantry, defending himself on every side.

"Thanks, Clitus; 'twas a brave stroke," Alexander cried, as he parried a blow with his buckler and, leaning far forward on his horse, killed a Theban soldier who threatened him with his spear.

" 'Tis a merry fight, my Prince, a merry fight!" Clitus cried, swinging his broad sword and cleaving the casque of an enemy down to his breast plate. "What, smut face!" he went on, turning about, "will you have it! But,

eye of Cyclops, I spare you for Bacchus' sake," he exclaimed, bringing the flat of his sword down on the casque of a red-faced Theban who crowded forward to avenge his companion.

Thus the Prince and his companion maintained their place undaunted, cutting and thrusting as their enemies crowded close upon them. But presently, Hephestion joining them, the three made headway against the fierce onslaught of their enemies. While thus hotly engaged the blare of the Macedonian bugles and the resounding hoofs of the approaching horsemen apprised them that aid was near at hand. And, indeed, its coming was quicker than they thought, for the Theban outlaws, already surprised by Alexander's sudden onslaught, hearing the trumpets and the fierce war-cry of the Companion Cavalry and believing the whole of Philip's army was upon them, turned and fled.

Freed from his assailants, Alexander's eyes again sought the silken howdah. Its curtains now were thrown aside and from out their folds the beautiful face looked down upon him, the eyes filled with tears of joy and thankfulness. Greeting him with a smile, she detached the veil that covered her head and threw it to him as if constrained to afford him some token of her gratitude. Grasping it as it fluttered to the ground, he raised his visor, crying high above the tumult, "Fear naught, the King's arms guard you!" saying which he turned and raising his sword high in the air as a signal to pursue the flying foe, he himself led the charge in person as before. Nor needed they such command, but followed swiftly on, their hearts filled with fierce rage as they cut deep into

the Theban band, sparing none. In this way the pursuit continued as the day waned, the outlaws turning again and again as they saw the small number of their enemies. But their courage proving of no avail against the fierce onslaught of the Macedonians, the fierce pursuit kept up until the Thebans, reaching the dark and tangled forests of the Enipeus, were lost in its gloomy depths.

Alexander bidding the trumpeters sound the recall, the Macedonians soon gathered about their leader, and raising the pæan of victory, the exultant soldiers took up their line of march for the camp, the fires of which showed faintly on the distant horizon.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

As Alexander and the soldiers neared the camp a great outcry was heard a little way off, where a blazing fire shot high into the evening sky.

"'Tis the 'Hungry Horde,' and with full stomachs by the sound," Clitus cried, with a wry face, tightening his belt.

"Yes; they despoiled the Theban camp ere you were half a mile away, and so have both supped and drank," Lysimachus, who had gone out to meet the Prince, answered.

"Ours is a sweet revenge on the treacherous Thebans. For while they will die wthout an outcry, they cannot abide hunger or thirst," Clitus exclaimed, thinking of the foe wandering in the tangled forest without supper or bed.

"The plunder of the camp belongs of right to those who fought and not to those who follow like wolves scenting prey," Seleucus, who thought much of the spoils of battle, angrily interposed.

"There was naught but food and wine," Lysimachus answered amiably.

"What does that matter? Such spoil is much to my liking, and the wine most of all. By the Gods, Clitus, they shall be scourged by slaves for their impudence."

"Nay," Alexander mildly interposed, "leave them alone, Seleucus, for they are both hungry and thirsty, while we have plenty."

"The plunder being plentiful will keep them many a day. For the Thebans, who love to eat and lift the wine-skin, travel not with empty larders," Ptolemy exclaimed laughing.

" 'Tis wholesome to have a good appetite, and thirst is not a thing to be despised. I warrant you the wine is strong," Clitus exclaimed, as the voices of the revelers became plainly discernible, singing an ancient hymn of Bacchus. "I would I had a sip of the stuff, for my throat's as dry as the treasury of Athens."

"Let us hasten then, good Clitus, for the Persian grandee, Oxyartes, in thankful mood, has sent to the camp a dozen skins of his choicest wine, a drop of which I tasted ere setting out," Lysimachus answered, smacking his parched lips.

Word of this abundance presently reaching the worn soldiers, there was a joyful shout, which Alexander hearing, stirred his steed into a gallop. Observing this, those who followed clapped spurs to their horses and in an instant all discipline was lost in the mad race to reach the camp. This had been fixed by the patient slaves, near a mountain stream, the Persian camp being placed somewhat apart in the open plain. Anticipating an early return of the pursuing troops, fires were burning throughout the camp and every preparation made for the evening meal. This consisted of the Macedonian ration of salt-meat, barley-cakes, cheese, olives and onions, and if it afforded no great variety was none the less inviting to

the worn troops. Reaching the camp they sprang from their horses and, throwing their bridle reins to waiting slaves, the hungry soldiers lost no time in sitting down to the bountiful repast, washing down the strong food with copious draughts of the Persian wine. This they drank from tankards of leather or, more primitive still, from the ancient bull's horn of their country. And soon their hunger being appeased, loud laughter and joyful song succeeded, not less boisterous than that which still sounded from the camp of the "Hungry Horde."

"There's nothing like a battle, Lysimachus, and a stubborn pursuit, to give one an appetite," Clitus gasped, draining his goblet. "It is far better than watching sheep amid the mountain mists," he went on, thinking of his youth. "'Tis more wholesome, too, old man, and for a burning thirst there is no comparison. By the beard of Cyclops, I could love the Thebans for their appetite and parched throats, if they were less filthy and regarded the truth more. But come, Lysimachus," he cried, springing to his feet, "we must be off. No! not another drop. Why man," he exclaimed, noticing for the first time that Lysimachus was far gone with intoxication, "you are drunk!"

"Say not so, Clitus. Have we not cut the enemy to pieces and put him to rout, and so may indulge ourselves a little? Nor shall we taste such wine again until Babylon falls and Persia's won. 'Tis not wine! But the ambrosia of the Gods. A night is all too short for such a feast," the old man cried in maudlin humor, draining his cup.

"All things in reason, old man. Now we must to the

Prince, who will be furious at your long absence," Clitus answered facetiously.

"Yes, 'tis true, the Prince is irritated when I am not near him, and though the pace sometimes tires, I will not distress him with complaints," the other answered with a silly smile.

" 'Tis clever in you, but come, now for a brisk walk in the cool air," and putting his arm about the old man he lifted him to his feet.

Alexander, meanwhile, on reaching the camp had lost no time in visiting and comforting the wounded, making such provision for their care as his love for his soldiers ever prompted throughout his battle-scarred life. Coming at last to his own tent he was surprised and grieved to find Hephestion with his head and sword-arm swathed in linen bandages. Between these two, one self-willed and fiery, the other mild and inoffensive of temper, there had existed from their childhood the tenderest affection; an affection destined to grow in strength each day as long as they lived. Others, Alexander honored and treasured but for Hephestion he possessed the deepest love, seeming to find in his society the restfulness his proud and adventurous nature craved. Seeing his friend return unharmed, Hephestion, who sat disconsolate, held out his hands in welcome, tears darkening his mild eyes.

"By the Gods, if you are hurt to death not one Theban shall live to tell the tale!" Alexander cried in furious wrath, bending over the white face of his friend.

"Nay! my hurts are but trifles, skin-wounds, that will be well within the month,"Hephestion answered with a faint smile.

"I missed you in the pursuit, but thought you had stayed to still the Persians' fright," Alexander answered, kissing him on both his cheeks.

"Nay, I sought to follow, sweet friend, but ere I had gone the length of my horse I toppled over and fell headlong to the ground like the weakling I am."

"You are no weakling, Hephestion, else I am one. For nothing that I have done but you might have done it better. But what leech mended you, for I thought all followed in the hot pursuit?"

"A woman, Alexander! And such a one as never before bound up the wounds of a stricken man on Grecian soil," Hephestion answered, his face flushing at the recollection.

"A woman!" Alexander exclaimed, scrutinizing the other, thinking his mind wandered.

"Yes; nor could you guess who she is in a year's time."

"Tell me, sweet friend, for you know I am not good at solving riddles," Alexander answered anxiously, gazing upon his wounded companion.

"This is no riddle, Alexander, for my nurse was no other than the Persian Princess."

"The Princess Roxana!" Alexander cried, thinking of the face that had looked down on him from the silken canopy, and wondering if it were she.

"Yes; and so gentle was her touch and so sweet the perfume of her presence that my wounds lost all their sting in the delight of having them bound by such soft hands."

"Tell me, good friend, which was she? Not the maiden who watched from the towering dromedary be-

side which we fought?" Alexander questioned, his face flaming at the recollection of the beautiful being.

"Yes, that was she, Roxana herself. Nor could there be another like her in all the world."

"How did it happen that she attended you? Was there no leech at hand?"

"I know not; only when I opened my eyes as I lay prostrate on the ground, she was bending over me and searching out my wounds. When I protested she bade me keep my peace, and with expressions of joy that I was hurt no worse. Her task completed, she hastened to the side of my companions, who, like myself, had been wounded in the fight."

"Did she minister to them in like manner?"

"Yes, to every one. Nor did she cease until all were placed beneath the cover of the tents. Then smiling upon us as we lay watching her, she waved her hand and hastened away to minister to her own people. 'Twas such a vision, sweet Prince, as man never saw on battlefield before, nor will again," Hephestion answered, raising his eyes to heaven as if offering a prayer.

"You say truly, Hephestion, for I myself saw her as she peered down from the back of the dromedary. And now not less plainly than then," he went on under his breath. "But rest you here till I return, for I must not longer delay my visit to the Persian embassy to welcome them in the King's name and make inquiries as to their needs," and hastening away, he mounted his horse, calling to Clitus and Lysimachus, who approached, to attend him.

Nearing the camp of the embassy, arrayed in glisten-

ing armor, the more superstitious cried out on beholding him in the bright moonlight, that it was a God. Seeing him more closely the Persians raised a shout, and leaving their tents, hastened to meet him with cries of welcome. Oxyartes, the chief of the embassy, pushing his way through the excited throng, threw his arms about Alexander, crying out:

"Deliverer and saviour! I greet and thank you for your bravery and timely aid."

"You owe me no thanks, good friend, for I but did what the King would have commanded in thus discharging his vengeance on the outlawed band," Alexander answered.

"Nay, 'tis to you we are beholden. For myself I owe you more than life, and so it is that my thanks but poorly express the throbbing of my heart," Oxyartes replied, remembering his daughter and the fate that would have been hers had she fallen into the hands of the Theban outlaws. "Tell me your name, oh Prince! For sure I am you are of no less exalted rank."

"Ye Gods! Can it be, Clitus," Lysimachus here broke in, "that there lives a man after Cheronea who does not know the Prince!"

"Hush, babbler! Men are but moles and know not that there is a sun," Clitus answered with a dry laugh.

"Macedonia has many princes, oh Persian," Alexander answered, "and of such rank am I. But most of all, I am a loyal subject of the King. And you, if I mistake not, are Oxyartes, Prince of Bactria, charged with the Persian embassy?" he concluded, saluting Oxyartes and the Persian nobles grouped about him.

"Yes, most gracious of Princes, and as such I crave the hospitality of your country," the other answered, bowing low in return.

"The very Gods command us to be hospitable to strangers, and 'tis an obligation the King delights to honor," Alexander answered graciously.

"Thanks, noble Prince. We expected no less from your brave and exalted King. But come," Oxyartes went on, "honor our encampment by dismounting that we may offer you some slight refreshment, of which you must stand much in need after the conflict and hot pursuit."

"Ere doing that, exalted Prince, I anticipate the commands of the King by proffering you the cover of my escort in your further journey to Pella," Alexander exclaimed with smiling countenance.

"In the same spirit I accept the gracious offer, oh Prince, if I may, without trespassing upon your kindness," Oxyartes answered, highly pleased.

"We go direct to Pella and so will be both accommodated and honored by the trust," Alexander replied.

"In this meeting I see a happy chance, oh Prince, and harbinger of success for my mission to Pella," Oxyartes exclaimed with elated countenance. "For I come with offers of brotherly alliance and messages of amity and love from my august master to the puissant King of Macedonia. I am favored above all men in being chosen thus to represent the great King, and now, because of this day's happenings, esteem the honor all the greater."

"You are most kind, noble Prince. The King, who will shortly return to Pella, will there welcome you and

strive to make your stay at his capital notable for its friendly hospitality," Alexander responded.

"The gallantry of the King's soldiers leads us to look forward to a happy sojourn in his capital. But, ere we sup, I crave permission to present my daughter to her preserver, oh Prince, that she may thank him in person," Oxyartes exclaimed, looking toward Roxana's tent, where she stood revealed, awaiting his coming.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PERSIAN PRINCESS, ROXANA.

Oxyartes placing his arm about Alexander, as if he were a beloved son, led him to where Roxana waited. Seeing this breach of kingly etiquette, Lysimachus raised a doleful cry and would have rushed forward to intervene had not Clitus, catching his bridle, bade him be still and let Alexander choose his own time for making his identity known.

"Ye Gods, that we should live to see a barbarian thus trespass upon the sacred person of our sovereign Prince!" Lysimachus exclaimed, scarce able to speak so great was his agitation.

"Peace, old man. The Persian is unconscious of offense and so there is none."

"What! Not offend by laying hands on the person of our exalted Prince, as if they were of equal rank and dignity?"

"Oh you have no sense, Lysimachus. Is Alexander to be soiled by the touch, like a bit of dainty satin? By Cyclop's beard, were I King you should cease to talk thus or I would send you back to con your studies, unfit for the companionship of men."

"But what would the King say if he saw himself thus demeaned in the person of his heir?"

"He would laugh, silly pedagogue, and wish the opportunity of such respite from the sycophants of the court

were his. Eye of Cyclops," he went on, observing Alexander. "How he blushes at sight of the Persian's daughter! Was there ever another Prince like him! Why, I was a forward youth with the sex at ten. But he! 'Tis twenty to one he wishes he had let the Thebans work their will, so shy is he of women."

"I would he had, if this Persian mend not his manners," Lysimachus answered angrily.

"Bah! He is most amiable, and his daughter of such loveliness, that if the Prince but see enough of her he will have other thoughts in his head than politics and arms."

"Look, Clitus! The Princess bends and kisses his hand in humble obeisance. That is more seeming."

"I would I could see Alexander's face flame at the touch like the red roses of Medius. But come, let us not spy upon them. Away to your couch, old man, while I look to the sentinels and make provision for the night," and turning about, he set off without further word.

Meanwhile, Oxyartes, unmindful of offense, led Alexander to a silken pavilion somewhat apart, where Roxana stood awaiting his approach with impatient interest.

This exalted Princess, so well known to students, was the most beautiful woman in all Persia, save the wife of Darius, the great King. Such is the account historians give us. It is related of her that no one could withstand the beauty of her face and form, all alike yielding to her entrancing presence. Her eyes, according to the mood that possessed her, were gentle and persuasive, or, when agitated, glowed with the buoyant rapture of an exuberant life. Her abundant hair, according to the custom of

Persian women, hung in rich curls about her graceful neck, forming a fit setting for so fair a face. Of brilliant complexion, her features were animated by a lively intelligence and such gentleness and kindly forbearance, mingled with queenly majesty, that those who knew her worshiped her as if she were a goddess. Like all Persians of pure blood, her face, oval in form, was no way different in complexion or features from the most exalted type of women of our own day. Possessing every natural grace, her bearing had been softened and refined by prolonged visits at the brilliant court of the Persian monarch. This frequent intercourse with the splendor and luxurious elegance of the refined capital, had heightened the grace of her manner and the charm of her presence without destroying the frank and conventional freedom of her mountain home. Such is the account we have of the beautiful and queenly woman who now watched Alexander's coming.

Putting his arm about his daughter and kissing her with tender affection, Oxyartes exclaimed, his voice stirred with emotion:

"'Tis to this brave Prince we owe our lives and all else we hold dear. You, better than I, sweet child, can express the debt we owe him," and placing her hand in Alexander's, he bowed low before the Prince, and excusing himself on plea of the confused affairs of his camp, hurriedly left them.

"We owe you our lives and all we hold dear, brave Prince," Roxana exclaimed in a low voice, and, raising Alexander's hand to her lips, kissed it as if only thus could she express the gratitude that filled her heart.

"You put too high a value on the service, gracious Princess," Alexander answered, taking her hand in his trembling fingers. "War is our trade, and we did only what the King would have commanded had he witnessed the cowardly assault."

"Nay; you were not thinking of your duty nor the King. It was a brave and generous impulse, all your own." And now, looking Alexander in the face for the first time, she started back on beholding in him the iron-clad soldier who had fought his way to her side and beat down the burly Theban who threatened her.

"'Twas a happy diversion for our soldiers, gracious Princess; nothing more. For the result was never in doubt and serving you by chance but added to the zest of the conflict. It is in such encounters that the King's soldiers derive their happiness and strength."

"You shall not thus disparage the act, brave Prince, for the Thebans outnumbered you three to one, and save for the surprise would not have fled without offering serious battle."

"Nay; they were beaten ere we struck a blow, for men have no hardihood in so base a cause."

"I watched as you beat off those who sought to kill you. But oh, the weakness of women, and so I was powerless to aid in any way," she exclaimed with a sigh.

"It was your face, sweet Princess, that gave force to my arm and that of my companions as the Thebans sought to overcome our defense," Alexander answered, drinking in the other's beauty and coloring at the familiarity of his speech.

"Ah, you have a sweet tongue, brave Prince, as well

as a strong arm. But did you receive no hurt in the conflict?"

"No, fair Princess, save the harmless bruises that always attend such encounters."

"I thought I saw a Theban lance pierce your armor as you fought below me. And truly, too. For see! Blood stains your shoulder and breast."

"'Tis nothing; a mere scratch; something I do not feel," he answered, striving to divert her attention.

"Nay, I will not be put off thus, brave Prince, nor let another minister to the wound. You owe me this for my debt of gratitude to you. Oh do not fear," she went on, calling to an attendant to aid her unloose his armor, "for I am skilled in surgery and the use of elixirs and balsams. I learned the art in my youth from a Scythian woman, long a captive at my father's court. So that you could not have a better leech if you would," she hurried on, giving him no chance to say a word as she skillfully unfastened his armor. "Do not crimson, brave Prince, for it is not the first nor, indeed, the hundredth time I have performed such office. For you must know that I follow my father like a faithful slave, and he, being more warlike than peaceful, I am often called upon to dress his wounds or those of his followers. Nay, it may be but a scratch, as you say, but you would make light of it none the less. That is the way with princes, who like to be thought invulnerable. But their blood is not more red, nor their skin less tender than that of the common soldier." Thus she went on, and coming presently to the wound found it to be neither deep nor dangerous, but still a thing to be feared if left uncared for. Calling for

water and paying no heed to his blushes and protestations, she skillfully cleansed the wound of the dirt and coagulated blood that filled the cavity. Then sending for a curative salve, she smeared it over the wounded part, after which, carefully bandaging the hurt, she released him, exclaiming: "There, brave Prince, if you will but protect the wound with some soft application till the second day, you will not suffer further inconvenience. And now that I have had my way, say if I am not a skillful leech?" and stepping back, she eyed him with half-modest, half-bantering, irresolution.

"It is as Hephestion avers, sweet Princess. For he says that Greece never possessed a leech half so skillful, nor one whose touch would cure whether the balsam be potent or otherwise," Alexander answered, scanning his arms as if to discover some other hurt. Seeing this Roxana cried out:

"No, there is no other wound, though my fee would not be greater were there a thousand."

"Whatever it may be I can never pay it, nor would I wish to. But tell me what it is that I may keep account of it in my heart."

"Nay, 'tis not hard. For I ask naught save the friendship of those I serve. Do you own the debt? If not, speak quickly, ere I become still more exacting."

"'Tis no payment at all, for I acknowledged the debt ere you touched my wounded shoulder. But 'twould add to the favor if you would promise me your friendship in return," he answered, taking her hand and kissing it, so great was his admiration for the beautiful and kindly woman.

"My heart went out to you in friendship when first I saw you and neither knew nor cared who you were. Now that we are friends you will be frank with me, will you not, for that is the first requisite, you know?"

"Yes, in all things," Alexander answered, enchanted with her speech and manner.

"Then tell me if all the princes in Macedonia are like you?" she asked with mischievous abruptness.

"I am the least among them, gracious Princess, in accomplishments as in years," he answered, surprised at the question.

"Then the great King does well to send my father hither," she answered, pondering on what he said.

"I fear for any resolutions the King may have made, once he falls within the spell of your persuasive presence," Alexander replied, gazing into the face of his companion with rapt admiration.

"I come not upon any errand save to attend upon my father, oh Prince. But I fear much for my own allegiance to the great King if all your courtiers pay me such sweet compliments," she answered, coloring at Alexander's rapt gaze and earnest speech.

"Beauty and kindliness, sweet Princess, loosen the dullest tongue. Our courtiers are little used to the graces of the Persian court, and so you must pardon them in me, if their speech be too bold or their admiration too little concealed," he answered, losing all fear of her.

"I have heard much of your people but knew not that their courtiers shamed those of Susa in chivalrous courage and courtesy of speech. But tell me, gracious Prince,

something about your country. Is the King, too, a gallant?"

"His respect and admiration for woman is so great, sweet Princess, that it outstrips in ardor the severe customs of southern Greece. But if this be true, his mind and glorious deeds excuse the fault. The weakness, if so it be, is allied to such greatness that it finds pardon and excuse therein."

"You sound his praise most nobly. And Alexander! Is he like his father?"

"Alexander up to this hour has never seen woman for whom he cared. Of this I could swear."

"That is strange, and is it true that he loves poetry and the Grecian dialogues, and at sixteen was regent, and so subdued the fierce Thracians?"

"Yes, he was regent and marched his army into Thrace, as you say," Alexander answered, coloring.

"I am told he is fair of face and of noble bearing. But of this I shall see for myself," she went on, as if speaking to herself.

"He will be glad to be judged by one so just."

"That we shall see. But how happy the fortune, brave Prince, that threw us across your path. For you will act as our friend at Pella, will you not, so that we may do no rude or unseemly thing?"

"I shall strive to be near you, gracious Princess, and if I can lessen your perplexities, I shall be happy in the labor."

"I was sure you would be no less kind. But does it not seem to you, my friend, as if we had known each other always? So it appears to me. We will be such trustful

friends, too, will we not? And that you may be remembered and honored by my people for the debt we owe you, tell me your name, brave Prince."

"I would not have you know it lest your kind interest grow cold with the hearing," Alexander answered reluctantly, seeing in such disclosure an end to all their unconstrained freedom.

"Nay, that cannot be. One name is not different from another where friendship binds," she replied in some confusion.

"Then, if you will not think the less kindly of me, I will do as you request," he answered in a low voice. But as he spoke his name the blare of trumpets and the neighing of Clitus' horses, as he busied himself placing a guard about the Persian camp, drowned his voice so that she heard but imperfectly, and so responded:

"ISKANDER! It is like all your Greek names, only softer and as if full of romance. Iskander, Iskander," she added, dwelling on the name as if she found pleasure in repeating it.*

At last, the evening waning, she took Alexander's hand, exclaiming:

"Come, let us rejoin my father." Wrapping her veil about her head, she cried: "I think your eyes show some spark of wonder that I, a Persian, should so far overstep the customs of my country as to appear abroad unveiled like the women of your own land. Say, if I am not right?"

*Thus through Alexander's reluctance to set her right, it came about that he became known to Roxana as Iskander; and so to all Persia; for even to our day, it is as Iskander, or Iskender, that he is remembered in the legends and traditions of Asia and India.

"I have heard of such a custom at your court, but have always thought it would be an act of grace to disregard it. Now, more than ever, I am assured of its impropriety, sweet Princess," he replied, retaining her hand.

"The custom may never be disregarded by women about the court, but I come from a far-off country where women are granted greater freedom than at Susa and Ecbatana. And so it is that I am able to accompany my father untrammeled, and meet my brave preserver face to face," she went on with ingenuous frankness.

"I shall love your country for being able to be near its fair Princess thus unconstrained," Alexander replied, his face aglow with admiration.

"And I shall be not less grateful for the assurance of having you near me in our journey through this disturbed country. For I shall fear every clump of trees, after the dangers of today, unless, indeed, you are close beside me," and blushing at her freedom of speech, she led him to the pavilion of her father, where a sumptuous banquet awaited their coming.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERSIANS.

"How I love the weak stuff, Lysimachus, after a night spent in emptying the wine skins," Clitus exclaimed the next morning as he filled and emptied his leather cup for the third time from the mountain stream.

"Water! Bah, I crave it not then nor at any time," Lysimachus answered scornfully.

"Your nose proclaims the aversion, Lysimachus, for it has the tint of indulgence fed to foolishness. Fie on you! For 'tis such as you that incite the Greeks to call us barbarians," Ptolemy exclaimed, as he sat watching his slave slowly turn a fat hedgehog before the blazing camp fire.

"'Tis not I who give rise to the base slander, for no one ever saw me drunk," Lysimachus answered proudly.

"No! You are like a Cretan reed, having length but no girth or substance upon which the wine may feed," Clitus answered, yawning wearily.

"But if over-indulgence cause the Greeks to condemn us, what do they say to the sleek Persians?" Lysimachus asked, scanning his lean body.

"Nothing. For no one ever saw a Persian drunk."

"But 'tis not that they drink less than the Macedonians," Ptolemy interposed, pricking the hedgehog with the point of his sword.

"No! But they sip their wine daintily, the oily, well-

fed men, while we drain the goblet at a draught," Clitus exclaimed, resting his head wearily on his hand.

"Yes, and so it was that when our brawny comrades left the banquet last night, scarce able to keep their feet, the Persians were smiling and sipping their wine as if the feast were just begun," Ptolemy exclaimed, eyeing the patient slave. "Nay," he cried, springing to his feet, "be not so slow with turning your spit, knave. The fat drops in the fire as if it were a thing to waste."

"But you remained, Clitus, when the others left," Lysimachus exclaimed enviously. "I hope you came off without disgracing us before the Persian wine pots."

"As to that I could not swear, Lysimachus, having no remembrance of the time or manner of my leaving," he answered, emptying his cup anew.

"You had done better to come with us, for 'tis a sign of weakness when a guest knows not how he reached his bed," Lysimachus answered with glee.

"I stayed out of politeness, for our master had eyes and ears for no one save the fair maid," Clitus went on, throwing himself on the ground and burying his face in the cool stream.

"For which you should be rewarded by the King," Ptolemy cried in derision as he departed with the savory hedgehog.

"What think you of these Persian grandees, Clitus?" Lysimachus asked critically, after some pause.

"I could find no fault with Oxyartes or Artabazus, but of Mithrines and Bessus, the first drank not at all and the other only lightly."

"I noticed it not."

"No, being intent on your own goblet. Mithrines, with the white face and cunning eyes, touched not the wine, but watched Roxana and the Prince with such a devilish leer that I came nigh to smashing my sword across the fox's face more than once," Clitus answered with a scowl.

"I had some converse with him ere the banquet began. He talked most learnedly of Greek literature, interspersing his conversation with many questions concerning the King and his court," Lysimachus answered grandly.

"Which you would have done well not to have answered."

"Nay, I paid little attention to what he said. But of Bessus? What was he like? For I remember him not at all."

"He was but an echo of Mithrines, only making great pretense of drinking while slyly spilling his wine behind the couch. Bah! I would not trust one more than the other."

" 'Twas a shameful waste of the Gods' bounty, Clitus, and Bessus is more to be despised than the other," Lysimachus replied, as if nothing could excuse so heinous a fault.

"They scarce took their wicked eyes off the Prince the whole evening, whispering apart, and ever and anon calling an attendant to go upon some errand which I could not but believe concerned our master," Clitus exclaimed with a discontented air.

"Can they have penetrated his identity, think you?"

"Yes, but feign ignorance, hoping to take advantage

of his supposed rank. Bah! I would the two of them stood before me with swords in their hands."

"That can never be, for their mission protects them inviolate," Lysimachus answered with a learned air.

"'Tis that enrages me, for they come meaning no good to any Macedonian. Surely the King's honor is not engaged in shielding such knaves?"

"Yes, unless they do some unfriendly thing. But did not the Prince remark their ill-will?"

"No; he saw only the Princess and scarce spoke to any other. Fie! His bashfulness is all a pretext, for more forward Prince never faced a blushing maiden. He loves her already, Lysimachus, if eyes be any index to the heart."

"Nay; 'tis only a distemper, Clitus, and will pass away with the night."

"'Tis a distemper that comes to every man once in his life, and often to his undoing. And Roxana, the sly puss, led him on betwixt blushes and laughter, as if she had never listened to speech of gallant before. Ah, beard of Cyclops, what will the King say?"

"He will laugh, for Alexander's passion, like his own, will vanish with sight of the first pretty face," Lysimachus answered confidently.

"No! For the Prince is not like the King more than the day is like the night. There is no idle dalliance in him, and should he have a passion he will be steadfast in it as in other things."

"I like not what you say, Clitus, and will go straightway and warn Oxyartes," Lysimachus answered, starting up.

"If you do, old man, never hope to look upon the Prince's face again. For if he does not kill you he will banish you from his presence though you had been a thousand times his teacher. 'Tis no business of yours or mine. And for the matter of that, the Princess is worthy of any man even were he King. I like the sweet woman much for her pleasant speech. She told me, Lysimachus, there was not a man in all Persia who could wield so strong a sword as I," Clitus answered demurely, scanning his stalwart frame.

"My master will thank me later for the service, even if he be angry now. It would be different, Clitus, were she the Princess of another country. But a Persian, bah!" and the old man rose to his feet shaking as with a chill.

"If the Prince has a passion for her and you do aught to balk it he will hold you in scorn all his life. For if he loves her he will put her above all the world. Neither state, nor his ambition, nor Philip's wrath will stay him more than the idle wind. What, fool! Have you been all these years near him and not know him better! You may easier bend this triple helmet than loose his fixed will. Begone! Wash your face, old man, and hasten to attend him," Clitus cried, rising to his feet and hurrying away to arrange for the day's march.

Alexander, impatient of his couch, arose ere the voice of the whip-poor-will had ceased its call from out the grove of olive trees near which his tent was pitched. Going at once to visit the wounded, he found them refreshed and cheered by the night's rest and eager to resume their homeward journey. Sending Demetrius, his

chief page, to ask the pleasure of Oxyartes, the Persian grandee returned immediate answer that they were ready and anxious to go forward. Upon this the Prince gave orders for breaking camp, and everything being presently arranged, they set off amidst the blare of bugles and the loud cries and discordant music of the "Hungry Horde."

CHAPTER IX.

THE WILD BOAR HUNT.

With the new day Alexander was as one transformed, all his former longings being forgotten in his passion for the Princess Roxana. Sleeping, her voice had sounded in his ears, as her face had filled the measure of his disturbed dreams. She, he likened, in his thoughts, not to any other woman but to some Eastern houri, told of by curious travelers, who forever cast a spell over the hearts and minds of those they look upon. Nor was this strange, for until now he had thought only of the chase, the mastery of arms, the wars, and his great ambition. His pleasure and recreation he had found in hunting and the rugged pastimes that fit men for war. But as the maturing stalk carries within its uplifted stem the coming flower, so his heart only awaited the propitious moment to respond with fervent ardor to love's enchanting dream. At last, thinking not at all of such things, he saw Roxana, and his heart, before untouched, was all aflame with the fire of his love. Not, indeed, as men who have played with such things, but with a burning passion before unknown. To him the obstacles of rank, the wishes of the King, the claims of Macedonia, were as naught. Was he not Alexander and so free to choose as his father had done before him! And so his passion, like the impulse that was to carry his conquering armies far beyond the limits of the ancient world, needed no schooling, but

leaped at once to its fixed conclusion. He saw and loved and as the rays of the morning sun lit up the mountain heights about him he swore by all the Gods that none other than Roxana should be his wife.

In this mood he sought her out, and she, smiling upon him, as he reined his steed beside her own, could not forbear to chide him for his tardiness.

"You are late in coming, brave Prince, to receive my thanks anew for your great service to us hapless strangers. I feared some new adventure had snatched you from us and I should see you no more."

"Nay, I did but linger, sweet Princess, that I might be the longer near you once I was free. For those who convoy such precious freight must needs look well to its safety," he answered, his heightened color showing the pleasure he felt in being near her.

"I see that sleep has not dulled your gallantry nor stilled your sweet speech," she answered, beaming upon him.

"Not more, with such impulse, than the mountain torrent is lessened by the steep incline it traverses. The dullest animal is brightened by the cheerful day, and so I find reflection of courtesy and wit in your sweet presence."

"For shame, oh Prince! Or if you will persist in saying such sweet things I must needs seek safety on my faithful dromedary," she cried, slowing her horse.

"Nay! Rather than that I will not speak at all. Or, if I do, only of such things as you may choose to have me," he answered, lowering his head as if in acquiescence.

"Your amiability excuses your fault, oh Prince. Be-

sides, I must needs make some allowance for the fervent gallantry of so accomplished a courtier."

"Nay, sweet Princess, do not ascribe my speech to aught save the impulse that calls it forth, for of courtiers or their arts I know not a thing."

"If that be true you would be an apt scholar once your mind inclined that way. But I must still doubt, oh Prince, till I can put your sincerity to some test," she answered, admiring Alexander's spirited steed.

"I would you might, for I have but one wish, and that to please you."

"Be not too sure, for it might be some absurd thing; perhaps a woman's whim."

"The whims of women, if there be such things, but prove the devotion of men," he answered with fervent admiration.

"You protest too much, oh Prince. But still I would try you, and not with any difficult thing," she answered, casting her eyes anew and with fervent longing on Alexander's horse.

"What would you, sweet Princess? No pliant slave, bending to the will of an exacting master, could respond more willingly than I."

"'Tis a slight thing and a woman's whim. Say if I speak not true, for I would exchange my horse for yours. Nay; do not frown, for I will not harm the beast. 'Tis only a fancy to try his metal. For of all the gallant steeds I have seen since quitting Persia he only is worthy of comparison with the Median barbs," she continued with eagerness, scanning Bucephalus' sinewy strength and supple limbs.

"Ask aught but that, for no one save myself can manage him, and I only by some trick, I know not what," he answered, greatly disturbed at her request.

"'Tis as I said, oh Prince," she cried maliciously. "Your sweet speech but covers empty compliments. I crave a simple thing, and lo, clouds darken your face, before so amiable. Say that you fear I will do him harm, or that you have made some vow that woman shall never mount his glossy back. Ah! I have guessed aright," and she frowned as if displeased at his refusal.

"I have, indeed, made a vow that no man shall ride him save myself," he answered, perplexed. "To you I would gladly yield if I dare, but he knows no hand but mine, and his fierce temper is so unbridled that no one can manage him except he wills it."

"Do you think so lightly of my skill, oh Prince? I thought you more gallant. If you fear for my safety you shall keep me company, for my Nysæan horse will easily keep pace with yours," she answered, smiling upon him as if he had already relented.

"Do not urge me, for I would gladly do as you ask, but dare not," he answered, scarce above his breath, so greatly was he disturbed.

"Then never speak kindly to me more, for I will not believe you," she answered, checking her horse as if to leave him.

"Nay, rather than that you shall have your way," Alexander at last reluctantly answered.

"Now you are again my gentle and chivalrous Prince. But quick, let us do the thing ere you change your mind," and, slipping to the ground, she prepared to mount the

Prince's gallant steed. Seeing this her father hurried to her side to inquire the reason for her dismounting.

"The gracious Prince consents at last to exchange his steed for mine, but loth he was at first to accede to my request."

"It is because my horse has never been ridden except by myself and is thought to be unmanageable in other hands," Alexander answered, turning to Oxyartes.

"You need not fear, gentle Prince, for there is not a horse in all the world Roxana cannot ride," Oxyartes cried with firm assurance. "She has so gentle a voice and fine a hand that your steed, however high his temper, will readily respond to her will once she is on his back."

Thus it was determined and the trappings of Bucephalus being changed, Roxana was lifted to his back. Responding to Alexander's voice and the caress of his hand, the noble steed stood still, nor gave hint of fear or temper of any kind. And never before, if Alexander's eyes spoke true, had horse borne more lovely burden. Supple of figure, Roxana seemed to be a part of the noble steed. About her graceful form there clung a loose Median robe of purple cloth, fastened by a belt encrusted with turquoise set in gold. Her delicate feet were encased in boots of pliant leather, half hidden by the silken garment of Persian pattern that reached to her jeweled ankles. Upon her head, as was the fashion of her country, she wore a silken turban of brilliant hue, adorned with precious stones. Nor was the costume of Alexander less inviting, for he, no longer thinking of the Tagus or the heroes of other days, had exchanged his armor for the soft garments of the cavalier. A rich Sicilian coat of

crimson cloth, girt about the waist with a belt studded with emeralds, now adorned his person, and from this a golden scabbard hung, encrusted with jewels, as was the hilt of his long and pliant sword. His lower limbs were encased in a closely fitting garment of white cloth, over which deerskin boots laced in front reached nearly to the knees. His head was adorned with the Kausia, the kingly hat of Macedonia, surmounted by snow-white plumes of ostrich feathers. Gauntlets of doeskin, embroidered with silk, covered his hands, while a short cloak of Tyrian purple fell loosely from his shoulders.

Thus they appeared, as Alexander, reassured, let go Bucephalus' bridle and sprang upon the horse Roxana had abandoned. At this the great steed, released from the spell of his master's hand, uttered a fearful cry, and, raising himself, plunged forward, shaking his head and beating the air with his forefeet in frenzied rage. Roxana, clinging to his back and giving him free rein, caressed him the while with voice and hand. Hastening to her side, Alexander sought to still the enraged animal, and hearing his voice the noble steed dropped to the ground as if ashamed. But not in quietude, for, taking the bit between his teeth, he sprang forward into the air as an arrow flies from the taut bow. At this Roxana, as if relieved of all her fears, turned and smiled on Alexander, beckoning him to follow. Thus she sped on with slackened rein, amid the frightened cries of her attendants and the wonder of Alexander's soldiers, who knew not what to make of the strange adventure. Drawing to one side, they made a path, and thus the marching column was quickly cleared and the open plain spread out before

her. Gaining in speed with each mighty stride, the noble animal flew onward, his head outstretched and his neck and breast flecked with foam. Urging his horse to the utmost speed Alexander sought in vain to overtake her. Snatching a spear from a waiting soldier as he passed he thought to kill the flying horse if in that way he might rescue Roxana from the danger that threatened her. Losing rather than gaining in the mad race, he sought at last only to keep the Princess in view. She, looking back, waved her veil as if to assure him that she had no fear. Thus she flew forward until at last, approaching a brawling stream, she sought not to restrain the flying steed, but, giving him free rein, urged him to his utmost speed. Coming at last to the brink, the noble animal gathering himself, shot into the air and, clearing the wide space, landed unharmed on the further shore. Trembling and hesitating, as if in doubt whether to continue the flight or yield, at last, responding to Roxana's gentle caress, he dropped his proud head in token of obedience. Thus Alexander found her, tranquilly awaiting his approach.

"Oh queen of women, in skill and courage, as in grace and beauty! You have subdued the horse as you had already overcome the master," he cried with joyful voice.

"The horse was the more difficult, fair Prince, if your speech be not in mere compliment," she answered, caressing the noble animal. "See how playfully he throws his head, as if in response to the music of a pipe."

" 'Tis sweeter music than pipe or horn that calms him," he answered soberly. "He is yours, fair Princess, for you are more worthy to possess him than I."

"No; I will not rob you of so priceless a treasure, generous Prince, for all Persia does not hold one like him."

"He, too, is of Persian breed, 'tis thought, having been brought to Pella from the Isle of Rhodes," he answered, gazing on the animal with rapt pleasure.*

"He is worth the ransom of a province, come from what country he may."

"Yes, but still not worthy of her who has thus conquered him anew," he answered with gentle voice.

"Do not venture too far, oh Prince, lest I rob you of your steed," she cried, enraptured. "But, come, let us retrace our steps, for we have gone far out of the beaten path and my father will be anxious for my safety," and, gathering up her reins, they descended to the bed of the stream, where they halted to refresh their worn horses. While thus engaged an angry roar, followed by the swaying of the bushes that bordered the shallow stream, warned them that some savage animal was moving swiftly in their direction.

"Quick, Roxana! 'Tis a wild boar, having his lair in the secluded dell," and, urging their horses forward, they cleared the stream as the front and bristling mane of a gigantic boar showed from the underbrush some yards away. Reaching the open ground, they looked back, but

*History recounts that King Philip gave thirteen talents, or $15,000 in gold for Bucephalus. But no one being able to ride him, Alexander, then twelve years of age, craved permission to mount him and doing so conquered the noble animal. Upon which Philip, embracing his son with joy, made him a present of the gallant steed. Alexander afterwards rode this horse at Cheronea and in every one of his great battles until, the noble animal dying of old age in India, he named a city in his honor.

the noble animal, content with having driven them from his secluded lair, made no attempt to follow.

"'Tis as I thought," Alexander cried, springing to the ground and giving his reins to Roxana to hold. "Stay here, fair Princess, while I secure the noble animal to garnish our evening meal."

"Nay, brave Prince, you would not attack him alone, armed only with spear and sword? A misstep and your life would pay the forfeit," she cried in fright.

"'Tis with spear and knife that we hunt the animal, sweet Princess, and my companions would hold me in slight respect if I ran away when armed as I am."

"But await their coming, brave Prince, for they must reach us ere many minutes."

"Nay; that would be to share the glory of the encounter," he answered smiling. "Fear not, but await me here, or seek greater safety in the plain." And whipping his spear to test its strength, and loosening his sword as he ran, he disappeared in the depths of the undergrowth from which they had just emerged. Reaching an open glade, he espied the boar fiercely regarding him from its edge, but a few steps away. Lowering the point of his lance he patiently awaited the savage onslaught, which he knew must quickly come. Nor was it long delayed, for the huge animal, champing his cruel tusks, losing no time, rushed forward with a cry of rage. Alexander, standing firmly on his feet, as the huge animal came up, received the brute on the point of his spear, burying the metal to the head in its quivering flesh. At this, the fierce animal swerving to one side, the shaft broke off, leaving only the handle in the Prince's hand. Raising this as the brute

turned swiftly upon him, he struck it across the face as he sprang to one side. But not in time to escape the sharp tusk of the enraged brute, as his torn sleeve and bloody arm too clearly showed. Springing back, Alexander drew his sword as the savage animal, gathering himself, came on anew with eyes of fire, his huge protruding tusks lashed with foam. But not now with such swift onslaught as before. Sorely hurt, it yet had strength to charge, and, coming forward with bent head, again sought to impale its foe on its curving tusks. But leaping to one side, Alexander, watching his chance, buried half his sword's length in the brute's shaggy side. Disengaging his weapon, the blood of the stricken animal gushed forth in torrents, coloring the greensward a crimson red. Stricken with death, the savage animal would not yield or fly, but turning, faced him anew with bloodshot eyes, its feet spread wide apart to steady itself for a new attack. But vain its courage, for while it sought to gather itself, its huge body, rocking this way and that, fell full length on the yielding turf.

"Bravo, gallant Prince! Never was deadly foe more bravely overcome," and, looking up, Alexander beheld Roxana's pale face peering at him from the shrubbery that surrounded the open glade.

"'Twas a foolish thing, Roxana, to venture here, for the boar would have attacked you had you come within his eye," Alexander exclaimed with some impatience.

"Fie! I could have fled if need be. And would you have me sit still, biting my nails, not knowing whether you were dead or not? You ask too much," she exclaimed with flushed face. "But you are wounded, sweet

Prince," she cried, springing from her horse and hastening to his side, trembling and affrighted.

" 'Tis but a scratch," he answered, opening his sleeve. "But hark! Our friends are here," and as he spoke Oxyartes and Clitus rode into the open glade.

Stopping short, surprised at what they saw, Clitus was first to break the silence, exclaiming:

"Hail, my Prince! We knew not what had befallen you, finding your horse wandering aimlessly in the plain and the other gone," and with the words he leaped to the ground to examine the stricken boar. "Spear and sword thrust! I would I had been here to see," he cried, scrutinizing the dead animal.

Losing no time Oxyartes sprang from his horse and hastened to his daughter's side, exclaiming as he folded her in his arms:

"See, my child, how near you were to causing the death of your protector by your mad prank!"

"It is the mighty Achilles come again to earth as I have always said," Lysimachus, who had joined them, here piped from out the group. "And 'tis I who taught him," he went on, poking the fallen boar contemptuously with his spear as if he, and not Alexander, had killed it.

"You were ever a brave teacher, Lysimachus," Alexander answered pleasantly, in gratification of the other's pride. "But come, let us hasten to rejoin our friends. And you," he went on, addressing the pages who had now approached, "devise some way to convey the boar to the evening camp to grace the board of our honored guests."

"Have all the King's officers of rank a corps of supple pages to do their bidding? The great King himself is

not better served!" Oxyartes exclaimed, his eyes dwelling on the picturesque youths, with their crimson cloaks and helmets of glistening steel.

" 'Tis the school in which our young nobles are taught obedience and the art of war," Alexander answered as his eyes dwelt with pride on the gentle youths.

"In that as in other things your war-like King shows his great wisdom," the Bactrian Prince answered as the little group set out on their return.

CHAPTER X.

THE POISONED CUP.

"'Tis as you say, Clitus," Lysimachus exclaimed, eying Alexander and Roxana. "The forward maiden has cast a spell over our Prince, for he has spoken to me but once today."

"The distemper grows upon him fast, for in one short night it has become a burning fever."

"I thought sleep would have stilled his passion. Nay, do not laugh, Clitus, for 'tis a serious thing when such as he fall in love."

"Eye of Cyclops, the lorn Prince regards not form at all, but pursues his love with the ardor of the mountain hunter," Clitus exclaimed as he beheld Alexander draw Roxana's horse near his own.

"He is like his mother and sets no bounds to his passions once they are aroused."

"He would never abide opposition when his heart was stirred. But, beard of Cyclops, I do not remember that love affected me thus in my young days."

"I would I might caution him to be more circumspect," Lysimachus answered fretfully.

"Let him alone. 'Tis better he love this sweet-faced maiden than fall a victim to Attalus' niece or some other contriving hussy."

"Methinks Oxyartes, if he were not blind, should have observed our master's passion ere this," Lysimachus responded with ill-concealed wrath.

"'Tis a wise father, old man, who has the sense to shut his eyes when men like Alexander come wooing. I would I had a daughter to catch his eye, however far apart their rank. For 'twould make no difference and soon you would behold me looking over the heads of all of you," Clitus cried, smiling at his own conceit.

"I would you had, Clitus, for then 'twould be no disgrace to our country," Lysimachus answered with a wry face, turning his horse aside.

Pursuing their way, Alexander and his companions presently coming in sight of the marching column, Ptolemy, who was in command, lifted his spear, whereupon the whole troop putting spurs to their horses set out at a gallop to welcome the Prince's safe return. As the soldiers drew near chanting the national hymn, Roxana turned to Alexander, exclaiming:

"Are all the princes of your country thus loved? Surely, Alexander himself could not be more honored by the soldiers."

"They make little distinction in such a matter between Alexander and another. Ours is a war-like nation and those entrusted with command are more honored than in those countries where peace reigns," he replied, raising his arm in salutation to the advancing troop.

"Secure the land thus favored!" the Bactrian chief interposed sadly, contrasting what he heard with the spirit of his own country. "For where a people are less adventurous, weak subserviency and love of ease quickly

sap the courage of men," he went on as he watched the advancing column with eager interest.

Parting to the right and left the soldiers raised their weapons in salutation and having passed, wheeled about without slackening speed, and so formed in column behind the Prince. And strange sight! each one displayed at point of spear or hilt of sword some bit of cloth of the color of Roxana's veil. Seeing this she snatched the helmet from Demetrius' head, and placing it on her own, waved the silken veil in fervid thanks for the graceful compliment. At this a great cry went up and Alexander, heeding it, wheeled about and raised his plumed hat in acknowledgment of the honor paid his fair companion. Then lifting his sword aloft, the troop set out at a trot, and this presently changing to a gallop, the cavalcade reached the line of march with clang of armor and thunder of hoof like unto the charge of a victorious army.

"Tell me, brave Prince, how it is you control Bucephalus," Roxana exclaimed in admiration as they drew rein, "for he answers to your will as if he were a part of yourself."

" 'Twas not so at first, sweet Princess. But giving way to his caprice, little by little, he came to love me. You, discovering the secret, overcame him as you overcome the hearts of men," he answered with eyes full of love.

"Why will you make every little thing the occasion of some sweet compliment?" she answered, blushing, but not as if offended.

"If I do it is because my mouth speaks unwittingly

what my heart feels. Those who love, 'tis said, know not how to conceal its whisperings, the delight of telling it being so great," he answered as if his passion were a thing already known.

"Oh Prince!"

"Forgive me, sweet Princess. I do but make excuses for one offense than I err more grievously than before. It were better I said nothing."

"Nay, I would not have you otherwise than as you are, brave Prince," she exclaimed with heightened color. "But our courtiers have such subtlety of speech that frankness has the appearance of being less honest than it is."

"You shall teach me to soften that which is too frank and avoid altogether that which offends by too great freedom," he answered enraptured, taking her hand.

"Nay, I would have you speak as you think. The courtiers of the great King so labor to conceal their thoughts that open speech is like the sweet air of heaven."

"Thanks, sweet Princess, but if I may judge from the looks of yonder Persian, the eyes of your courtiers do not seek to conceal their thoughts, however discreet their tongues may be," Alexander answered, glancing toward Mithrines, the Persian grandee, who seemed always to be hovering near them.

"Have you observed his forwardness, the Satrap of a Satrap?" she answered scornfully.

"His trappings are worthy of the Persian King and so I took him to be some great personage."

"His trappings, yes; but in other things he is unworthy of your notice."

"Nay, if he be not in your favor that is all I care to know. But tell me how he has offended you?" Alexander asked, observing her look of distress.

"By his ungracious actions and evil looks," she answered in a low voice.

"If that be so, how does it happen that he is here, in your father's train?" Alexander asked in surprise.

"Governor of Sardis, he is entrusted with some special mission by the great King and so is without the bounds of my father's control," she replied with constrained voice.

"Surely, Darius would not knowingly put so great an affront on your father, sweet Princess, when he entrusts him with events of such importance to his kingdom?"

"I know not how it is, for the great King loves my father as his very life, for, indeed, it is to him he owes his life."

"His life? Then indeed the tie must be a strong one, for the lives of kings are held more sacred than those of other men, though they have like value to all."

"Yes, and not to be measured if the King be young and handsome, and, withal, ruler of Persia."

"Tell me what the service was if it be not a secret."

"'Tis a long story, oh Prince, and I fear the telling of it would weary you."

"If it be long, so much the better," he answered, regarding her with rapt admiration.

"You must know, then," she went on, giving him a sidelong look, "that the lives of our kings in these later years have been scarce a span in length; and all through the wickedness of the eunuch Bagoas, through whose

cunning and skill Egypt was recovered to the Persian crown. Because of this service Ochus, the great King, enriched him and made him a minister about his person. But in an evil hour the eunuch, thinking to become still more powerful, murdered his noble master, seating Arses, a weak Prince, on the throne instead. But the latter, a little while after, offending his exalted subject in some way, Bagoas put him to death secretly, as he had his predecessor. Being now all powerful he caused Darius, our present King, to be seated on the throne. But scarce a year had passed when Bagoas, possessed with the fever of murder, planned Darius' death as he had the others; and poison being the surest agent and occasioning less remark than any other, he chose that means of achieving his end. But my father being the King's cup-bearer and having spies about Bagoas, discovered the design ere he could put it in execution. Bagoas, suspecting nothing and intent upon his purpose, caused the fatal cup to be prepared and presented to the trusting King, as he supped with his court about him. Approaching Darius my father whispered in his ear that his very life depended on his doing as he said. Darius, staring and dumfounded, nevertheless nodded assent, upon which my father called Bagoas to approach the King's couch. Suspecting nothing he knelt in all humility before the great King, whereupon my father with much courtesy of speech—for I stood by and heard all—exclaimed, 'The King, in acknowledgment of your love and in some requital of your long service to the state, desires you to exchange cups with him, that his affection for you may be made more clear to all the court,' and ceasing he took the goblet

from Bagoas' shaking hand, presenting the King's to him in exchange. At this, turning white and all of a tremor, the vile wretch would have declined the invitation, but the King, leaning forward, cried in a voice that could be heard throughout the room, 'Drink, Bagoas, to your King.' "

"And Bagoas?" exclaimed Alexander with impatient interest.

"The wretched creature was not less brave than cruel. Seeing that his contrivance had been detected and that there was no escape, he raised his head and, looking the King steadfastly in the face, drank the fatal draught."*

"Alas! poor King, I hope he may not live to regret his refusal of the proffered cup," Alexander answered in a low voice, as if foreseeing the distressful life and cruel death of this most unhappy of monarchs. "But 'tis the fate of kings to die like great Ochus, rather than upon the field of battle or in their bed, sweet Princess. In my own country of its sixteen kings and expectant heirs fourteen were foully slain in the fifty years preceding Philip's rise. Yet," he went on, as if speaking to himself, "as one generation follows fast upon another, each strives for the dangerous honor, forgetful of the others' fate, or boldly daring it."

" 'Tis as if some avenging deity ordained the manner and hour of their death ere they were born," Roxana

*When Persia at last succumbed to Alexander's arms, the wardrobe of the eunuch Bagoas when brought to light, was found to be worth the enormous sum of 1,000 talents, or about $1,150,000 in gold. Such is the account of historians. Nothing could more fitly illustrate the riches of Persia or the power and splendor of this astute and cruel minister of the great King; a creature bred in the harem of the Persian court for a servile office.

answered with pitying voice. "Glad I am, oh Prince, that no friend of mine is of the kingly house. 'Twould be as if he were already condemned to die. Mithrines," she went on, as if in warning to her companion, "will find a favoring atmosphere at Pella if his mission be what I fear it is. But see, oh Prince, how the creature scowls upon you as if contemplating some foul deed."

"Nay, do not harbor such distrustful thoughts, sweet Princess. He can do me no harm, but because he gives you annoyance, I will bid Clitus put some sure curb upon him," Alexander answered reassuringly.

"No, no, you shall not meddle, Iskander. For you must know I have not dared voice my complaints concerning him, lest my father's mission suffer and his reputation be impaired thereby," the sweet woman answered passionately.

"Fear not, sweet Princess, that your father will be harmed by anything I may do."

"Nay, you shall not act at all, for only harm would come of it. He is not like other men, and so it is I fear that the great King sends him here. A Greek, he is more Persian than my father. Yet at Athens he consorted only with our enemies, losing no chance to harm our cause."

"Then he is both traitor to his King and renegade to his country."

"Nor is that all. For last night when the Thebans thronged about us, he took no part in the defense, weak though it was, but stood some way off, looking on as if he wished the marauders might work their will."

"By the Gods! if that be true he deserves to die," Alex-

ander answered, conjuring in his mind the fate that would have befallen his companion had the Thebans' attack succeeded. "So great an infamy merits death and I will lose no time in having Clitus set a watch upon him. It will be a favor he will relish once he knows the man's baseness."

"Promise me, Iskander, that you will have no quarrel with him. Nay, do not shake your head, but promise, if all the kind things you have said were not in idle merriment," and reaching out she laid her hand on his, looking in his face with such earnest pleading that he was at last fain to do as she asked.

Mithrines, as if divining that their speech concerned him, now putting spurs to his horse, approached them, bowing low on the black Syrian steed he bestrode with graceful ease.

"Hail, fair Princess, and greeting!" he cried with ill-concealed anger, "if the seeming danger that threatened you, and your pre-occupation with these strangers, has not caused you to forget your friends."

"The danger I incurred was nothing, or had it been this brave Prince was happily near to save me," she answered coldly.

"'Tis an old device to put life in seeming jeopardy that credit may follow some successful trick in averting it," he exclaimed scornfully.

"The danger I incurred in mounting the untried horse was all my own and despite the Prince's effort to dissuade me from the foolish act," she answered reluctantly.

"For which failure it seems he is to be further favored."

"Your rude speech is singularly ill-timed, Mithrines," Roxana answered, laying her hand on Alexander's arm to stay his rising speech, "where we owe so much and have so little with which to repay the debt."

"I hope, fair Princess, you do not look upon last night's intrusion as a service, for we should have had little difficulty in extricating ourselves without meddlesome interference from without."

"Such speech is little becoming in one who took no part in the defense, but stood apart as if afraid," she answered scornfully, beseeching Alexander with her eyes to keep silent.

"If I did as you say, it was only to find some sure way of averting the danger afterwards," he answered, coloring.

"Yes, and while you pondered we were overcome. But others more brave, if less discreet, seeing our distress rushed in and we were saved from death. The noblemen of Persia are strangers to so much discretion," she exclaimed, looking into Alexander's face with piteous entreaty.

" 'Tis a thing never held in high esteem there or elsewhere where those in command, by rash adventure, endanger what they unwisely seek to mend," Mithrines answered, waving his hand towards Alexander.

"For shame, to give expression to so rude a speech," Roxana cried, her face on fire.

"Why should you take offense when the object of your solicitude seems not to be touched by what I say? But perhaps he is only familiar with the rude dialect of the Macedonian tribes," Mithrines answered contemptuously.

At this Alexander furiously spurring to the side of Mithrines, caught his bridle rein, exclaiming in a frenzy of rage:

"Coward and renegade! dare you use such speech in the presence of this gentle Princess! Begone! Nor show yourself again till you are called!" and whipping out his sword he struck Mithrines' horse across the flank with its glistening side.

"By the Gods, your speech shall cost you your life!" Mithrines cried, drawing his sword and turning upon Alexander. But the latter, returning his weapon to its place, cried out in derision:

"Begone, renegade, slave of a Persian master, and seek more fit occasion for the display of your valor."

"While you hide behind the rabble that follows you," Mithrines cried, scarce able to speak, so great was his wrath.

"You have nothing to fear from them. For we allow every latitude in my country to those having a personal grievance to redress," Alexander answered with cold disdain, returning to Roxana's side.

"I shall take occasion ere the day closes to teach you to be more circumspect of speech and act," the other cried, white with rage and shame, and putting spurs to his horse plunged forward to where his companion, Bessus, awaited his coming.

"Is that the creature you would have me fear, gentle Princess?" Alexander exclaimed, his eyes lighting up with mirth. "Fie! the buffoons who beguile the Athenian rabble in the market place are more dangerous."

"Think not lightly of him, oh Prince, for he is not

lacking in courage. 'Twas he, I more than suspect, who gave the Thebans notice of our coming, hoping to gain some end thereby and yet escape suspicion," she answered confidently.

"That I can well believe, but wonder the more to find him trusted and in such company."

"His part in the embassy is not thought to be to his honor, for it is believed he is here to spy upon his colleagues and incite the enemies of Philip and Alexander to put them to death. My father has such fears and keeps him under watchful care, but Mithrines being his colleague he cannot act effectively or make known his suspicions to others. I, who am not bound by any rule, may speak thus frankly, although I could not say as much to Philip or Alexander."

"Thanks, gentle Princess, for the warning which I will not fail to heed in devising measures to protect the person of the King."

"And the Prince not less, Iskander."

"Oh, he is in no danger, fair pleader, for he has done nothing to arouse the fear or enmity of any one. But tell me how it is, sweet Princess, that your King entrusts so great a citadel as Sardis, the bulwark of his western border, to so poor a guardian?"

"I know not, except that the King is far away and must trust some one."

"If such men be chosen then weak must be Persia's defense," Alexander answered thoughtfully. "But you are wearied, sweet Princess. Let us exchange our horses for the sheltered seat on the back of your gentle drome-

dary. There you may rest and I still keep your company. Such journeying will be new to me."

"If that be so, it will not be to your liking, for the ungainly animals are as rough of motion to those unused to it as a troubled sea."

"Which I would gladly seek, fair Princess, if finding it I might share the discomforts with you," he cried, springing from his horse and lifting Roxana to the ground.

Seating his companion on the kneeling dromedary, Alexander placed himself beside her, nor found the seat too crowded. Quickly accustoming himself to the awkward motions of the patient animal he exclaimed as he contemplated the picturesque landscape:

"The view, fair Princess, from this lofty seat well repays the discomfort if there were any."

"Yes, here one may see the Thessalian plain in all its beauty. It is like the valleys of far-off Bactria. But tell me of these heights," she went on, gazing with rapt admiration on the towering mountains.

"They are a part of the life of Greece and what the Macedonians who were bred among the mountain solitudes love most of all. That lofty chain," he went on, pointing to the west, "reaching to the north and south far beyond the compass of our eyes, is Pindus' rugged outlines. The mountains in our front are the Cambunian range, and beyond them Macedonia and Pella lie. The snow-capped mountain to the right is mighty Olympus, and amid its lofty solitudes the Gods of Greece watch over the destinies of men," he exclaimed, with reverent awe. "This way, where the mountain dips, lies the Vale

of Tempe, sweetest of earth's treasures. Crowding upon it from the south is rugged Ossa, the haunt of savage animals and still more savage men. To the south and bordering on the sea Pelion rears its crest. Before us the strip of vivid green, low down on the horizon, marks the Peneus, Thessaly's noble river. There, upon its banks, if it please you, sweet Princess, we will fix our camp for the night."

"Afterwards, sweet Prince, does our course lay straight across the mountains or do we make some slight detour?"

"Tomorrow we follow the winding river through the Vale of Tempe to find vessels awaiting to carry us to our destination, if that be your choice."

"I did not know that Pella lay by the sea."

"Nor does it, but on the Lydias, a lazy stream that the King has deepened and widened till it has room for the largest vessel," he answered, thinking with pride of the great achievement.

"Did you plan the journey as you describe it from the start or is it some new thought?" she asked with curious interest.

"We had intended to cross the mountain, but thinking the other less tiresome, couriers have been dispatched for ships to meet us, if that be your pleasure."

"This change is all on our behalf, not yours. Say! is it not so, gallant Prince?" she cried, her delight showing in her smiling conutenance.

"If it were and it pleases you, would not the comfort of our guests be warrant enough for the change? Perhaps, too, I had a selfish reason, for in the way I have planned

our journey will be somewhat prolonged," he exclaimed, gazing into her face and striving to read her thoughts. But if she were displeased no sign of it showed in her smiling countenance. Thus they moved slowly forward, saying little, their hands often touching, and ever with some thrill of pleasure till then unknown. At last as the sun sank behind Pindus' towering heights the lofty citadel of Larissa came in view. Turning to one side they halted some distance from the ancient city and there fixed their camp for the night amid the oaks and stately beech trees that bordered the banks of the turbulent river.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MIDNIGHT DUEL.

Fixing his camp close by the river bank Alexander bathed and prepared for the daily sacrifice to the Gods. Encasing his feet in sandals, he donned a tunic of snow-white linen, crowning his head with a circlet of oak leaves. Summoning his followers to the sacred duty, they erected a rude altar of stone, adorned with sprigs of pine, upon which they lighted a fire. Now, in special thanksgiving and praise for the protection and favor accorded them, a young bull was brought forward as an offering. Cleansing his hands in a silver basin and offering a prayer, Alexander sprinkled the sacrificial barley on the head of the waiting animal. Then cutting the hair from off its forelock he placed it on the fire with the kernels of barley. Every preparatory office being now completed, Clitus coming forward, struck the animal to the earth with a blow on its upraised neck. Ere it could regain its feet, Craterus who waited, severed its throat, the black blood being caught by Alexander in a silver ewer as it flowed from the gaping wound. Holding it aloft and asking acceptance of the God, he poured the offering on the sacrificial fire. Afterwards the head of the bull being severed he lifted it up in like manner as an offering. Clitus and the others now flaying the animal, the thigh bones were separated and covered over with pieces of fat. These, being the portions allotted to the

Gods by sacred custom, Alexander placed upon the fire to be consumed, pouring libations of pure wine upon the offering.

The sacrifice completed, the other parts of the animal were cut into portions and roasted upon spits, equal parts being allotted the waiting soldiers. The evening meal being now in order it was attended with indulgence in wine, the first drops poured into each cup being emptied upon the ground as a libation. In this way, having eaten their fill and every sacred duty being performed, those who had feasted reclined at length on the mossy bank and drank their fill. And in this last the Macedonians ever indulged to excess, their habits in this respect being the scorn and aversion of the more abstemious Greeks.

The daily sacrifice was a part of Alexander's life, for he ever believed in the protection and guidance of the Gods. Not in a bigoted or self-assertive way, it may be said, but as a part of his inheritance as a Greek; for when, as emperor of Persia, he was brought in contact with the strange religions of Asia, he paid their devotees the respect of his countenance and protection, but never to the forgetfulness of the Gods of his own country. Such was the amiable nature of this great warrior and chivalrous Prince throughout all his stormy life.

Separating himself from his companions at an early hour, Alexander retired to his tent surrounded by the royal pages whose duty it was to wait upon him and watch by his bed at night.

While reclining on a couch discussing with Clitus the doings of the morrow they were disturbed by the approach of the Persian grandee, Bessus, his cloaked form

looming like a spectre in the light of the Pierian torches. Clad in a loose Median robe of purple cloth, he stopped upon the threshold of the tent and, bowing low, awaited speech from the Prince. Seeing him, Clitus sprang to his feet with hospitable intent, and passing his drinking horn to Demetrius, cried out with cheerful good will:

"Welcome, noble Persian. You are in good time to drink a bumper to our sweet Prince and the God of Night," and catching up a cup he filled it to the brim. Approaching the waiting guest he sought to lead him to a couch, but the other, disengaging his arm and straightening himself up, answered with little show of courtesy:

"I come not to drink nor indulge in idle pleasantry, but to fulfill a duty that calls for few words, and admits of few civilities."

"Eye of Cyclops! What manner of man are you to thus reject offer of hospitality, be your errand what it may?" Clitus answered in surprise. "But come," he went on, observing the upraised hand of the Prince, "join us in a bumper to the great King, if that be more agreeable to you."

"Nay, I cannot drink with those to whom I bring a hostile message even to honor the great King."

"Then by Cyclops' beard, the sweet earth shall have what you refuse," Clitus exclaimed in a towering passion, dashing the cup to the ground. Drawing his sword he cried: "Quick! tell me your errand, proud Persian. You will not find a Macedonian backward in answering such a summons, come from whom it may."

"Nay, be not so hasty, Clitus," Lysimachus interposed with mild speech. "The Persian has mistaken our tent

for another. We have no quarrel with him, a follower in the train of Oxyartes, our honored friend."

"No, there is no mistake if this be the tent of him whom you call Prince," Bessus answered, somewhat contemptuously.

"Whom we call Prince! By the beard of Cyclops, insolent dog, I will spit you where you stand if you venture further to transgress the dignity of our Prince!" Clitus cried, menacing the other with his uplifted sword.

"Peace, Clitus, let him deliver his message and depart. What matters its form?" Alexander answered, without rising from his couch. "Go on, Persian, I am listening."

"I bear a message, oh Macedonian, from Mithrines, Governor of Sardis, a Prince in rank, to demand apology or other suitable reparation for the insult publicly offered him by you this day."

"Do you think, spiller of good wine," Clitus interposed, with scornful wrath, "that the exalted Prince will bring dishonor on the King by fighting with the Grecian renegade? I were the more fit and will answer when and how you will," he went on, drawing his cloak about him.

"The noble Mithrines will fight only with the Prince. He has no cause of quarrel with the underlings of the camp," Bessus answered shortly.

"Do you call me an underling! By the flaming eye of Cyclops, defend yourself ere I run you through!" Clitus cried, advancing on him. But Alexander, restraining him, from his couch, with a word, called to Bessus, exclaiming:

"Go to your friend, noble Persian, and say that the Prince will grant him his prayer within the hour."

"Nay, such a thing must not be. What would the King say?" Lysimachus cried, falling on his knees in supplication.

"He would say that princes, like other men, must punish those who insult them, and with their own hands if need be. Go to your friend, oh Persian, and when the moon shows above the mountain, I will meet him on the border of the plain. Let him be mounted and clad in armor," and dismissing the messenger he drank off the goblet of wine which he had held until then untasted.

"By the Gods, 'tis thus you should answer the proud Persian. Etiquette and kingly dignity to the dogs, say I," Clitus cried, falling on his knees and kissing Alexander's hand in rapt admiration. "When you have stretched Mithrines on the plain I will do no less for Bessus."

"No! You have no just quarrel with the Persian, Clitus. He does but espouse his friend's cause, and if he be rude in performing his office, the offense may be excused," Alexander answered sternly.

"Nay, sweet Prince, I will give him good cause for his own killing. Dead, there will be one Persian less when we cross the Hellespont."

"No, I would not, for any private grudge, have a Persian noble missing from the great King's ranks on that eventful day," Alexander answered, springing to his feet, as if the conflict were already at hand.

"Alas, the sorry day that Achilles should draw private sword against a lesser foe than the great King himself," Lysimachus piped, in a broken voice, from the couch on which he had cast himself.

"Remember, good Lysimachus," the Prince answered mildly, "'tis thought I am only an officer of rank, and to decline the combat would dishonor both myself and the King."

"But I have only to say you are Alexander and that will end it," the other answered, starting up.

"But I would not have you to avoid a thousand such encounters," Alexander cried impatiently, thinking of his love. "Be still, good Lysimachus," and turning to Clitus he cried, "Arm and mount and I will do the same. nor must we keep the Persian waiting."

Clitus forthwith taking his leave, Alexander motioned the waiting pages to approach and assist him to put on his armor. When this was done and his horse brought he hastened to join Clitus, who already awaited his coming. Emerging from his tent Alexander, to his great surprise, came full upon Roxana and her father.

"Our visit is most inopportune, oh Prince," Oxyartes exclaimed, seeing Alexander armed, "and we must crave pardon for obtruding unannounced."

"Nay, you are ever a welcome guest, but now, oh Prince, an urgent matter prevents my entertaining you with fitting hospitality," he answered, taking Roxana's hand and lifting it to his lips.

"Is there some danger to the camp, gentle Prince, that you and the noble Clitus go forth at night thus armed?" Roxana asked with trembling voice, as if divining the nature of his errand.

"The savagery of the country constrains every one to go armed, sweet Princess, though it were only to make the rounds of a peaceful camp."

"One were not safe a stone's throw otherwise," Clitus interposed in further excuse.

"But your guard, sweet Prince? Surely it should accompany you if there is danger," Roxana persisted, grasping Alexander's hand in both her own.

"You do not count Clitus, sweet Princess. What need is there of guard if he be with me?" Alexander responded pleasantly.

"Tell me your errand, sweet Prince, for you seek but to mislead us by what you say," she cried, tears starting in her eyes as she looked Alexander beseechingly in the face.

"My errand is not one that endangers the life of either of us," he answered, pressing her hand. "Go to your tent, sweet being, and let no thought of me disturb your peaceful sleep."

"Oh guard your life, Iskander, lest losing it I should die of grief, knowing I was the cause," she murmured in a voice so low that only he could hear.

"I could not lose it if I would, knowing you have some interest in its preservation," he answered, bending low over her hand and pressing it to his lips. "Adieu, sweet Princess, till tomorrow," he exclaimed, taking leave of her, and mounting his horse waved her a fond farewell as he rode away.

Reaching the open plain, the full moon filled its broad expanse as with the light of day. Looking about they saw no one, the quietness of the night being undisturbed save by the whisperings of the sleeping forest.

"We are early, or more likely the braggarts have evaded us," Clitus exclaimed, looking about. But even

as he spoke, those they sought emerged at a gallop from the shadows of the trees. "No, by the beard of Cyclops, they are in good time. Wait here, my Prince, while I fix the particulars of the fight," he cried, as the Persians came to a halt some distance away. Hastening to the side of Bessus he exclaimed, as he reined in his horse: "We await you, oh Persians, as you see."

The other, saluting him, cried out, with little show of ceremony:

"Place your man and I will do the same, the distance to be not less than one hundred paces."

To this Clitus assenting, Bessus went on in a voice that everyone could hear:

"The fight being on, what conditions do you impose?"

"There can be none, save that it be to the death," Mithrines angrily interposed.

"'Tis what I would have asked," Clitus answered grimly. "When the combatants have been placed," he went on, turning to Bessus, "we will meet midway in the field, if that please you."

"The signal?" Bessus exclaimed.

"The lowering of my spear."

It being thus agreed, they turned, each placing his principal in the open moonlight facing the opposing horseman. This being done Clitus and Bessus joined each other midway of the field as had been agreed. Now everything being ready, Clitus lost no time in giving the signal to engage. At this the adversaries, with shields upraised and spears protruding, spurring their horses to the utmost, rushed upon each other with savage fury. As they closed with thundering sound the mighty on-

slaught bore each rider backward on his steed, the horses, stayed by the shock, sinking, quivering, on their haunches. The combatants, unharmed, quickly recovering their seats, raised their fiery steeds with voice and spur, and wheeling, charged anew. But without harm save the shock, each catching the other's spear, as before, upon the face of his protecting shield. Turning about, and Alexander's horse swerving within the shadow of the overhanging trees, a figure darted from the forest with uplifted spear to thrust him in the side. Observing the treacherous foe in time Alexander received the blow upon his uplifted buckler, and keeping on at topmost speed ran his assailant through the body. Tearing his weapon from the quivering flesh he whirled to find Mithrines close upon him. Bracing himself to meet the shock, he received the other's weapon full on his upraised shield, the crushing blow shivering the shaft in Mithrines' hand. Then, as the latter passed, and before he could recover his defense, Alexander hurled the bloody spear he held aloft full at the other's glistening helmet. Hitting the mark the cruel weapon tore open the closed visor, burying its sharp point in Mithrines' face, hurling him to the ground.

"Thrust him through the throat ere he regain his feet," Clitus cried, seeing his master throw himself from his horse and rush upon Mithrines with uplifted sword. But the latter, lying still, Alexander offered him no further violence, but regaining his spear sprang lightly on his horse. Slipping from his steed Clitus ran and kissed his master's hand, exclaiming:

"Eye of Cyclops, but 'twas a pretty fight!"

"Hasten, Clitus, and see if you can do aught for the stricken man," Alexander cried as he drew to one side.

"Nay, he does not merit kindness at our hands," the other exclaimed, with a wry face.

"Overthrown, he is no longer an object of enmity. Hasten to him, then, as I say," Alexander answered sternly.

Going forward as directed, Clitus called to Bessus, who knelt beside the prostrate body:

"How is it with your honest friend, oh Persian? Has he gone to join Pluto's gloomy throng, or has he still some breath left in his treacherous body?

"He breathes and that is all that I can see," the other answered, without looking up. "Go your way. I need you not."

"But you are alone and helpless," Clitus answered, relenting at the sound of the other's melancholy voice.

"I have attendants near at hand," the other answered, and calling aloud in the Persian tongue a slave ran out from the shadows of the forest.

"I thought as much. Be on your guard, oh Prince, for these people fight with poisoned arrows," Clitus cried, springing on his horse and releasing his sword.

"Nay, no harm threatens you," Bessus answered, looking up. "I knew naught of the armed man hidden in the forest. Nor did the noble Mithrines. 'Twas some private enemy of your master and not a thing of our contriving."

"A tale for children's ears. Come, sweet Prince, let us be off," Clitus exclaimed, gathering up his reins.

Taking their way toward the camp they passed close

to the Persian tents and doing so two figures concealed in the edge of the forest hastened away as they approached. But not so quickly that Roxana's graceful form could not be discerned as she fled beneath the overhanging trees.

"'Tis the same with King and peasant," Clitus exclaimed under his breath as he saw Alexander start. "Both fall a shaking at sight of the one they love. Yesterday this fiery Prince was like triple steel; today, he trembles as any shepherd might if his love shows him some favor."

Saying naught and musing on what he had seen, his heart filled with tender emotions, Alexander rode on to the camp, where he found the pages and officers awaiting his return. Waving his hand in grateful thanks he entered his tent and, his armor being removed, threw himself on his couch to ponder on the events of the day. But most of all upon his sweet love, Roxana, and the great kindness she had that night shown him.

CHAPTER XII.

OLYMPUS.

"Yesterday the noble and puissant Mithrines had four attendants, Lysimachus, today he has but three," Clitus cried the succeeding morning as he busied himself brightening his armor before Alexander's tent.

"You were ever curious about small things, Clitus, and foolishly," the other answered coldly, as if it were a weakness he despised.

"But wisely in this case, old man."

"Why more wisely now than at another time?"

"Because it is a thing that concerns the Prince," Clitus replied, straining his voice.

"The Prince! How can the number of the Persian's servants concern him?"

"You would not be the wiser if I told you," the other answered dryly.

"Tell me, good Clitus, and judge afterwards," Lysimachus cried, his pride aroused.

"Oh, 'tis a small matter and you despise such foolishness."

"Tell me for all that, good Clitus."

"Well," Clitus went on in a loud voice, "Eumenes, captain of the watch guarding the Persian encampment, reports that three armed attendants followed Mithrines and Bessus to the plain last night, but that only two returned and they bearing the stricken Mithrines."

"Well, what of it, save that Mithrines had been wounded by the Prince?" Lysimachus asked, losing interest in the story.

"Afterwards, the two attendants left the camp as before and Eumenes, being curious to know their errand, followed on. Reaching the open plain they stopped beside the body of the missing man, who lay outstretched in the shadow of the trees."

"Well! Well!"

"Taking up the body they carried it to the river bank, and depositing it, offered up a prayer. Afterwards, lifting the body, they hurled it into the swift running stream. Then a singular thing happened, Lysimachus, for as the body shot through the air, it uttered a frightful cry."

"The man was alive!" Lysimachus exclaimed, shuddering.

"So it appeared to Eumenes, but ere he could move or speak, the swift current sucked the body down into its black depths."

"What did Eumenes do then?"

"Nothing, and why should he? What is a follower of Mithrines more or less, Lysimachus? Moreover, his orders are to guard the Persians and not meddle with their pastimes."

"Was that all?" Lysimachus asked, only half satisfied.

"Yes, except that he reports, and this is curious, that the attendants of the noble Mithrines are neither Persians nor Greeks, but Macedonians."

"Macedonians! How does he know that?" Lysimachus rejoined, his curiosity excited anew.

"By their speech," Clitus replied, yawning as if tired

of the subject, "for it is that of the mountaineers about Bermius, so Eumenes reports."

"And he having so reported, Clitus," Alexander exclaimed sternly, emerging from his tent and confronting the gossips, "and you having now told it to Lysimachus, let the matter go no further. The reason does not matter. Be silent and forget that you have heard the story," saying which, he smiled amiably on his faithful friends and fastening his cloak took his way to the Persian encampment.

"What mishap was it that befell the attendant in the plain, think you, Clitus?" Lysimachus continued querulously, as Alexander disappeared.

"Heard you not what the Prince said, oh babbler! Shame on you, Lysimachus, that you should speak of the matter further," and fastening his cloak about him as Alexander had done he walked away.

Approaching the Persian encampment Alexander found Roxana awaiting him at the entrance to her tent. Taking his hands in hers she looked in his face, exclaiming as if in mirth, while a sob filled her throat:

"Was it kind in you, noble Prince, to seek to mislead me in so serious a thing?"

"'Twas not a serious thing, sweet Princess, nor worth the telling; and so it has turned out," he answered lightly, as he bent over her hand and kissed it.

"'Twas a danger and the more to be feared because the forerunner of others from the same hand," she answered in a troubled voice.

"Such dangers are a part of the lives of men, Roxana, and not things to be feared or brooded over."

"No! if they come from an open foe. Such dangers men boldly face, but a hidden and treacherous enemy! Who can hope always to escape him when death may lie in every bush or tree you pass?"

"Men do not regard such dangers more than others, and now that I am forewarned, there is no further cause to fear, sweet Princess."

"I shall fear for your life just the same, oh Prince, for women ever tremble for those they hold dear, if by chance their lives are threatened."

"Is it thus you hold my life, sweet Princess?" he cried, enraptured. "Danger, if it bring such sweet solace, is not a thing to shun, but to meet with open arms."

"Is it strange that your life should be dear to me, as it is to my father, after what has happened?" she answered in excuse. "A day is sometimes like a thousand years in one's life, and so it is now, in ours."

"Thus I have thought, for, though I have known you but a day, everything is changed and what went before is as if it were a dream."

"No, it is now you dream, Iskander. Tomorrow you will awake and smile when you recall today," she answered with mournful cadence.

"But if I should not, will you still look upon me with some favor? for I cannot live otherwise."

"Nay, rather than that I would promise anything, for you know, we cannot lose our brave protector," she answered, smiling.

While they were thus half confessing their love Oxyartes approached, and seeing Alexander, hastened to him, exclaiming with much embarrassment of speech:

"I have just come from your tent, brave Prince, where I went to offer excuse and humble apology for last night's happening."

"You owe me neither excuse nor apology, good friend. No harm came from it and so it is a thing already forgotten."

"So brave men ever treat such matters. But your forbearance does not lessen the breach of hospitality and 'tis the greater shame to me that it should have happened under cover and without my knowledge," Oxyartes answered, embracing Alexander in gratitude.

"I held you blameless, nor could you be accountable for the acts of others in this case more than in another."

"You are generous in this, oh Prince, as you are chivalrous in all your acts. Were Mithrines amenable to me, I should dismiss him within the hour. But as it is I can only make humble excuse for the gross affront."

"The adventure ending happily, we are the better friends because of it. Is it then a thing to be regretted, oh Prince?" Alexander answered smiling.

"Mithrines was justly punished for he can scarce lift his head from his couch. Because of this, brave Prince, I come to ask that the march be delayed until the morrow. If he is then unable to proceed," Oxyartes went on with warmth, "I will leave him to his own devices."

"There is no cause for haste, oh Prince, and I am glad of the excuse for tarrying," Alexander answered, glancing at Roxana. "And today, being free, I may go forward and make inquiries regarding the ships that await us on the coast."

"May we not keep you company part of the way, oh

Prince?" Roxana asked appealingly. "It would be better than staying here, for after last night's happening the camp is hateful to me."

"I would have planned it thus had I been less stupid, and I pray, Oxyartes," he went on, appealing to the Bactrian chief, "that you do as she requests."

"Nay, brave Prince, I cannot absent myself from the camp. But Roxana may accompany you if it will give her pleasure and not embarrass you in any way," Oxyartes answered, kissing his daughter.

"Her going will inconvenience no one, and will lessen the regret I have at leaving you behind," Alexander answered courteously.

"When do you set out?" Roxana interposed, unable to restrain her impatience. "For I already anticipate all the happiness of the excursion."

"In an hour, if that be your pleasure."

"Adieu till then," she exclaimed, smiling upon him and hurrying into her tent.

Returning to his camp, Alexander made all needed arrangements for the journey and the guard being collected he sprang upon his horse. Seeing this Lysimachus, who was not included in the company, set up a doleful cry:

"Am I to be left behind, sweet Prince, while others less worthy ride by your side?"

"You are better here, old man, for the journey may savor of danger once the pass is entered," Clitus spoke up impatiently.

"Was not Phœnix with Achilles at the siege of Troy, and am I to be left behind where naught threatens save Clitus' fears?" Lysimachus cried, appealing to the Prince.

"Let the good master go, Clitus, if he has a mind. But arm yourself, Lysimachus, if only to do honor to the Princess."

Hastening to do as he was told and presently all being in readiness, they proceeded to Roxana's tent, where they found her mounted and awaiting their coming. Taking their departure without loss of time, they soon reached the ancient city of Larissa, now in a state of great decay because of neglect and the many wars from which it had suffered. Loitering for a while in its quaint streets, the scene of so many melancholy tragedies, they journeyed at last toward the Vale of Tempe.

"What new mischief is afoot now, oh Prince?" Clitus exclaimed, riding up and pointing to one of Mithrines' attendants who was hurrying past. "Eye of Cyclops, but I have a mind to run him down and send him to keep company with his fellow meddler in the swollen river!" To this Alexander, making no answer save to wave the other back, Clitus retired to his place, muttering: "To-morrow, oh Prince, you may wish you had let me have my way."

Reaching the entrance to the vale Alexander dismounted, and lifting Roxana to the ground, seated her on a mossy bank where she could view what lay before her undisturbed. And it was a picture, of which there is none more beautiful or sublime in all the wide world. On their right Ossa's massive heights rose in the clear atmosphere like the uplifted earth, clothed in garments of brown and vivid green. Huge and rugged, with rounded top, it resembled some sluggish giant asleep in

the warmth of the summer day. In front of them as they gazed, the glistening river, half hidden, stretched its winding course toward the sea. White and foaming, where its angry waters were too rudely compressed by the huge rocks that crowded close upon its banks, it became calm as the tranquil skies, where greater breadth gave compass to the hurrying stream. On its banks palms and stately plane-trees spread their extended branches, and back of these as a setting to the picture, olive trees and vivid evergreens and verdant shrubbery gave to the view a sylvan beauty.

On the left, Olympus rising abruptly, appeared in its steep and towering height, as if about to topple into the slumbering vale. On the bank of the river, about the base of the great mountain, solitary cliffs, emulous of each other's height, projected their castellated towers, like stately sentinels, far into the unclouded sky. Around the foot of the uplifted mountain, and as a fringe, huge oaks, old and moss grown, raised their sturdy strength. Further on in the vast stretches and gloomy canyons of the solemn height, dense foliage clung in luxuriant masses to its rugged sides. Above this a forest of pine trees, black and ominous, enveloped the mountain side as with a pall. Here the soft verdure of the earth ceased its growth as if, having reached the farthest limit of productive life, naught else remained. Above the band of sombre pine trees, great masses of crumbling granite, wrought in every fantastic form, supported the snow-clad summit of the mountain. This last, seen in the crystal atmosphere against the deep blue of the far-off sky, seemed to float rather than rest in the ambient air. Such is and

was Olympus, rising stern and threatening ten thousand feet from the picturesque vale beneath. Not like other mountains, but seemingly alive, listening and watching, as if husbanding the secrets of the mighty Gods who for ages unknown watched the doings of men from its mysterious heights.

"Is it amid these solitudes and soaring heights," Roxana exclaimed, as they sat still, looking with awe upon the great mountain, "that the Gods of your country dwell?"

"Yes. Mighty Zeus, and about him other and lesser deities who respond to his all powerful will," Alexander replied in a low voice, as if the listening Gods heard all he said.

"Do they control all things?" she asked, wonderingly, as if believing what he said might indeed be true.

"Yes, and as they are pleased or angered the affairs of men prosper or go to ruin."

"If they be angered, how do you propitiate them?" she asked with curious interest.

"By invocations and sacrifices and the keeping of the observances they require of mortals."

"If they be not propitious, how do they make their anger known?" she queried, gazing with awe upon the mighty mountain.

"In many ways, sweet Princess. By the misfortunes that befall us; by signs and omens; the troubled sky, the thundering and lightning that accompany the storm. Each has a message of love or admonition. The entrails of animals tell a story to those who read them aright, and the flight of birds not less. This morning as

I sacrificed to Apollo, an eagle, the emblem of my house, hovering for a while above the camp, at last took its upward flight and so was lost to view; and from this I know that whatever befalls me or those I love, no harm will follow."

"Then returning to the camp I may rest secure, knowing that no peril threatens you," she answered soberly, believing all he said, so much are we impressed by love and the mighty forces of nature.

"Yes, though I hold danger sweet, if through it I gain greater favor in your eyes," he answered, caressing her hand.

"It were a cruel thing to exact such services for a thing of so little value. You need no such venture, you know full well, oh Prince, to find favor in my eyes," she answered, the color deepening in her fair face.

"Oh heavenly Princess, sweetest of women! what witchcraft have you wrought that I should have but one impulse, one hope, one thought, and that to please you," he answered, his face and eyes aflame with the passion that consumed him.

"It is but a fancy, born of our strange meeting and the romance of the peaceful plain and towering mountains. In a little while you will find me not more to your liking than other women; and this, I fear, ere I have been a week at Pella."

"Speak not of Pella," Alexander answered, a cloud passing over his face. "The thought of its hates, its sycophants, its waiting intrigues, sends a chill to my heart. Here I am free to do as I will, and here, beneath Zeus' watchful eyes," he went on, rising and extending

his arms toward the mighty mountain, "I swear to be ever thus in all my heart's desire."

"What is your heart's desire, sweet Prince?" Roxana asked softly, awed by the solemnity of his oath to the listening God, yet wishing to lead him on.

"Your love, sweet woman, and naught beside. All else is but as gilding to the golden chain that binds me to you. Nay! turn not away your sweet face, Roxana, but let me read some ray of hope in your soft eyes," and, grasping her hands, he would have thrown himself upon his knees had she not held him fast.

Raising his hands to her lips, she kissed them, answering, scarce above her breath:

"I love you, sweet Iskander, so brave and gentle and true."

Filled with indescribable rapture, he put his arms about her and, drawing her to him, kissed her again and again in all the happiness of loving and being loved.

"Now you are mine, sweet love, in sight of all the Gods who hear our sacred vows. Nor shall any power less great sever the bonds of love that bind us to each other."

"You forget, Iskander, that I am Persian and you are Greek, and that between our people there is deadly hatred," she answered, a cloud darkening her eyes.

"I care not, sweet Roxana. We wage not war on women, and our Kings have ever wed whom their hearts desired."

"Your Kings! What mean you by such speech, Iskander? Are you not what you seem, a simple Prince?" she cried, with agitated voice.

"No, sweet love, not what I have appeared, but Alexander, Philip's son. Nay, if you turn from me thus, I will disown the tie nor ever own it more. I did but deceive you for a while, dear heart, that I might be free like other men. But now, having won your love as a simple Prince, I will as Alexander, nourish it forever."

"Not Iskander, but Alexander, heir to the mighty King that Persia fears!" she murmured after a while, the tears that glistened in her eyes showing all too plainly her deep regret.

"To you I am Iskander, the simple Prince you loved, and nothing more; and thus it shall ever be."

"But the King, the mighty King! And your mother! They will kill me ere they permit so strange an alliance," she replied, hiding her face.

"My mother loves me above all things on earth and will approve all I do. The King may not oppose, but whatever he may do or say it will not change my purpose to make you my wife and Queen," he answered sternly.

"O why did I not know that you were Alexander! The King will cast you off and I will have been the cause. No, no! Iskander, sweet Iskander, I love you too much to betray you thus," she cried, the tears streaming down her pale face.

"No such thing can come of it, sweet love. I am rightful heir, and while loyal to the King, I will reign when he is dead, were a thousand Kings to say the contrary," he exclaimed, with flaming eyes.

"Is it you, Iskander, so gentle and loving to me, of whom all men talk since Cheronea?" she answered with

sorrowing voice. "Can you be Alexander?" she went on, as if unable to think of him save as Iskander.

"Yes, to all save you. It is as Alexander that the army and people know me, and 'tis as such they believe me fitted to govern and lead them to new conquests; and because of it I shall be free to choose my Queen, as I shall, when King, be free to shape my destiny."

"But you may be cut off in a night by those you thwart. How often it has happened thus in Susa," she sorrowfully replied.

"In such peril Princes ever pass their lives. It is their destiny. Nor will my loving you add to the danger. So smile upon me, sweet being, and dismiss your fears, for from this hour our hearts and fortunes are forever one," and, pulling her face to him, he sought to dry her tears with his fervent kisses.

"I cannot deny my heart, sweet Iskander. My love went out to you when your upturned face, shining upon me, beamed confidence and strength in the midst of the fierce Theban soldiers," she exclaimed, throwing her arms about his neck.

"May the Gods favor the outlaws who thus gave me opportunity to win your love," Alexander answered, returning her caress. "But see, my sweet, how low the sun. While we have lingered in such sweet dalliance the day has passed. Now 'tis time that you returned and I went forward on my errand."

"Nay, return with me, Iskander. Or take the guard, for I need no one but Clitus," she answered, looking down on the sleeping valley, bathed in the fast lengthening shadows of the mountains.

"No, sweet one. It is but a half-hour's ride and I shall reach the ships ere the sun has set," Alexander answered, and lifting the trumpet that hung at his side, he signaled Clitus to bring up the waiting escort. "Form your guard about the Princess, good Clitus," he went on as the latter approached, "and return without stop, for it will be dark ere you reach the camp."

"You will not go on unattended at this late hour?" Clitus exclaimed, looking down with anxious eyes into the slumbering valley.

"Why not, brave friend? One might venture without spear or buckler, but armed, what have I to fear?" he answered lightly, as he helped Roxana to her horse. "Adieu, till tomorrow, sweet love," he whispered in parting, bending over and kissing her hand. Then motioning Clitus to proceed, he stood still, watching his love until the intervening ground hid her form from view.

CHAPTER XIII.

FOR THE KING.

Lysimachus, detaching himself from the group of officers and pages who patiently awaited Alexander's movements, had long since set out alone to make his way to the waiting ships. Going forward he, ever and anon, in fervid fancy, fixed his spear as he bore an imaginary adversary to the ground, or, drawing his sword, cut down some enemy who menaced him. Thus he went on, greatly pleased with himself, when suddenly he was startled midway of the vale, by an armed horseman, who emerged from the shrubbery that bordered the picturesque road. Alarmed, he would have fled, but the other threatening him, cried out:

"Stay, spear-shaft, ere I dull my lance on your shining armor!"

Standing still, the face of the frightened pedagogue lengthened and paled beneath his glistening helmet. But the other offering him no harm, he cried out at last, with some show of courage and strength of voice:

"How now, knave! Dare you stop the King's messenger! Make way ere I run you through," saying which he struck his lance with fierce vehemence against his resounding shield.

"Softly, Elongus," the other cried derisively. "Dull not your armor with self-inflicted blows, but come with me, and peacefully, lest harm befall you."

"Out upon you, rogue! I am the Prince's tutor and companion, and to stay me is to call his kingly wrath down on your knavish head," Lysimachus exclaimed, his courage rising as the other made no move to attack him.

"Cimmerian Gods, but your master must be a brave Prince to need such guidance! Come, yield, Elongus, ere I spit your bowels with my lance, as one would open a clam's mouth," the robber cried, lifting his spear as if about to charge.

"Nay! You dare not, for, know you, I am Phœnix and wait upon the living Achilles. So give me humble leave to pass, for friends await me further on," Lysimachus replied with quavering voice.

"If you are Phœnix, I am Bilbo, the Pishwar, a sheep man from a cattle country. I serve no stripling master, know you, but Ossa, King of the mountain-side and spreading plain. Yield, then, ere I run you through," he cried, gathering up his reins.

"Nay, good Bilbo, pretty man," Lysimachus replied with timorous voice, "there is no such King, but rather this peaceful mountain."

"What, wretch! dost deny my King after whom the mountain was named! Guard yourself, for I am on you!" and clashing his armor he spurred full upon the cowering Lysimachus. But the latter, making no move to defend himself, Bilbo drew rein, crying in scorn: "Is it thus, Elongus, that you teach your Prince how to fight! Come, then, with me. With training, you will make a cook for a real King," and, taking Lysimachus' spear from his trembling hands, the outlaw grasped the reins of

his horse, and turning abruptly from the road was in a moment hidden by the dense foliage.

Alexander, ignorant of his tutor's mishap, followed the winding road, unconscious of everything, save that he loved and was beloved. Thus half the sylvan vale was traversed when, coming at last upon a grassy spot, he saw before him a horseman of gigantic stature, fully armed, sitting at ease as if expecting his coming. Awakened to life, Alexander, stopping his horse, awaited the other's movements. Seeing this the stranger spurred into the open and, courteously saluting him, cried, as he raised his heavy shield:

"Throw down your arms and yield, oh stranger, or dare the chances of open combat and doing so lose your life!"

"Have I no hope, then, think you, in such encounter?" Alexander cried, entertained, saluting the other in return.

"No one who disputes with me in battle ever lives to tell of the encounter," the other replied with amiable condescension.

"Who are you who dares boast of his strength in presence of the mighty Gods?" Alexander cried impatiently.

"Ossa! King of the rugged mountain and lord of the peaceful vale," the other exclaimed in response without making any move.

"Own rather to the title of robber and outlaw, and being such I will kill you in the King's name, according to his express command," Alexander cried, putting his lance in rest.

"Nay, be not in such haste to lose your life, but yield peacefully, as did the boasting Phœnix scarce half an hour ago."

"What! Have you snared that harmless old man? He who never harmed man or beast?" Alexander cried, filled with surprise and rage.

"Yes, and the good man is now peacefully cooking my supper, which, indeed, you may share ere the vale is black with night, if you will," the robber answered carelessly, thinking the other would yield, and caring little whether he did or no.

"By the Gods who look down on us from yonder heights," Alexander cried in rage, "if he be cook he shall have no other carcass but thine to turn upon his spit," and lowering his spear, he rushed upon his huge foe.

"Well, if you will, vain man," the robber cried in derision, lifting his shield and leisurely fixing his lance, as if despising the other's onslaught.

Rushing forward and guiding Bucephalus with his knees, Alexander held his spear as if meditating a direct attack, but nearing his huge adversary, he turned to one side and thus his lance, passing the other's guard, struck the robber full upon his mailed breast. But uselessly, for it did no other harm than to stir the angered outlaw in his firm seat. Uttering a hoarse cry, the robber whirled to strike his enemy down, but Alexander, evading the stroke, circled the glade, awaiting a more favorable opening. Thus the unequal combat continued, Alexander losing no chance to attack his enemy, while evading the thrust of the robber's mighty spear. Worn at last with the effort to reach the Prince with his ponderous weapon, the outlaw stood still, eyeing the other and awaiting his attack. Impatient to end the struggle, Alexander, retreating to the utmost limit of the glade, turned and urg-

ing his horse with voice and spur, again fiercely assailed his enemy; but the outlaw upholding his great buckler, the Prince's lance piercing the shield to the core, was splintered in his hand. Interposing his shield the outlaw's savage stroke, which quickly followed, glanced upward and so flew harmless above the Prince's head. Drawing his sword Alexander, furious with rage, closed with his stalwart foe, giving him no further chance to use his long and heavy spear. At this the robber, dropping his lance, drew his sword, and thus with clash of weapons and flash of fire, whirling and circling, each sought an opening to strike the other down. Drawing apart for a moment, impatient, they closed anew, their weapons flashing as they clashed in mid-air or fell with resounding blows upon the mailed armor or uplifted shield of the other.

"Thou game cock!" the robber cried at last, beating down Alexander's defense and raising his ponderous blade high in air, brought it down with a mighty stroke full upon the Prince's glistening helmet. Stunned by the blow, Alexander drew back, but quickly regaining his strength, threw himself with redoubled fury upon his unharmed foe. Beating down Alexander's defense anew, the outlaw raised his weapon, but Alexander observing the movement, interposed his sword to stay the stroke. Descending with lightning speed, the massive blade of the outlaw broke the lighter weapon of Alexander short off in his hand.

Believing the victory now assured, the robber rushed forward with a fierce cry to finish the combat with a stroke; but Alexander evading the onslaught, released his

battle-ax, and circling the plain, charged anew at headlong speed, full upon his invincible enemy. At this Bucephalus, as if conscious of his master's danger, responding to the Prince's voice, lifted his feet high in air as he approached, and plunging forward, fell like a thunderbolt on the smaller steed of the robber chief, crushing it to the ground. His enemy thus exposed, Alexander raised his battle-ax and with a mighty stroke felled the robber to the ground. Springing from his horse, he beat down with blow on blow the other's upraised shield, and so at last had him at his mercy. Seeing this the robber king, unable to offer further defense, released his shield and, lying motionless, awaited the cruel stroke. Observing his adversary's brave demeanor, Alexander, holding his battle-ax aloft, cried out in pity:

"Yield, oh King! For you deserve a title no less exalted."

"Nay; kill me, brave man, for I, a Prince in my own country, resisting Philip and all his army, may not surrender to one of less royal blood."

"If that be all you ask, brave Prince, then yield, for I am of no less royal blood than Philip."

"Then you are Alexander? Or Amyntas, Perdiccas' son?" the robber exclaimed, staring upward in astonishment at his chivalrous foe.

"I am Alexander, Philip's son," the Prince answered, looking with admiring eyes on his prostrate enemy.

"Then I may yield without dishonor. For he who overthrew the Theban army may well beat down the strength of a single arm," the robber answered with cheerful voice, rising to his feet.

"It was not I who overcame you, courageous man, but my brave horse. Responding to a trick I have taught him, though not with any serious thought, lifting his body, he bore you to the ground," Alexander answered, placing his face against that of Bucephalus' in tender caress.

"He more resembled a dragon than living horse, oh Prince. For as he came on, high-uplifted, his bloodshot eyes blazing through the covering of his head, appeared as though a demon threatened me." Ossa answered, eyeing Bucephalus as if still having doubt of his identity.

"How does it happen, brave man?" the Prince responded, viewing Ossa's stalwart form and noble countenance, "that you follow so base a calling when honorable service at arms only awaits the asking?"

"The chief of a captive tribe," Ossa answered, in a melancholy voice, "I fled with the remnant of my people to avoid death or slavery, and so honorable employment being denied me, I became a robber and outlaw, as you see."

"Such has been the fate of many," the Prince answered with sympathetic voice, "but now, brave man, I offer you freedom and honorable service in the King's army if you care to change your mode of life."

"Do you speak in truth, oh Prince, or only to try me?" the other asked, as if doubting what he heard.

"In truth, brave man, and all who follow you may find like service if they will."

"I accept the gracious offer for myself and my companions," Ossa cried in quick response, his countenance lighting up with a noble ambition.

"But may you pledge thus unreservedly, those who follow you?" Alexander asked, surprised.

"Yes, for it is a part of our tribal life that he who overcomes the head shall rule in his place, all yielding obedience to his successor. You, having conquered, now become chief of right, and so may do as you please."

Astonished at what he heard, Alexander asked the number and whereabouts of the band, for of man or horse there was no sign.

"I know not their present number, oh Prince, but they await my coming in our secure retreat far up the mountain side," Ossa answered, gazing on the rugged heights above them.

"If that be so, then let us lose no time in seeking them," Alexander cried in response, springing upon his horse.

Taking their way without further speech beneath the overhanging trees, they presently began the ascent of the mountain, now so obscured by the gathering darkness that the path was not discernible to one less familiar with the ground than Ossa. Climbing the steep ascent, they followed the obscure way, black with the shadows of night, until, at last, they reached an open space on the border of a mountain stream. Uttering a peculiar cry, a follower of the outlaw hastened forward in answer to the summons. Giving him his reins Ossa exclaimed, turning to Alexander:

"We must leave our animals here, brave Prince, for only men or savage beasts can climb the fierce ascent. Nor need you fear," he went on, as he observed Alexander's reluctance to leave Bucephalus behind. "This

trusted man will care for your horse as if he were the King's groom."

Caressing his steed with word and hand, as if parting from a cherished friend, Alexander followed on in Ossa's steps. Going forward with labored effort, amid the stunted oaks and dense shrubbery that clung to the mountain side, the path presently emerged upon the broad surface of a granite rock. Looking down, Alexander could plainly discern the deep valley, while above, the summit of the mountain top was clearly outlined against the moonlit sky. At the further extremity of the wide terrace a cave opened on the mountain side and here, to Alexander's surprise, lights were to be seen and men engaged cleaning their weapons, or busily preparing the evening meal. Stopping at the entrance the chief uttered a shrill cry, whereupon, each grasping his weapon, hastened to group themselves about him as if some pressing danger threatened.

"Have you brought us Achilles to assist the brave and learned Phœnix?" one of the most forward and repulsive of the robbers exclaimed, going close to Alexander and scanning him in the uncertain light.

"No, Prado; I have brought you a chief instead," Ossa answered quietly.

"A chief!" the outlaws exclaimed, some in amazement, others with incredulous voices.

"Yes, according to the ancient laws of our tribe. For he overcame your chief in fair fight, and having him at his mercy might have killed him had he been so inclined," Ossa exclaimed, turning and saluting Alexander.

"What did he instead?" Prado queried with gloomy brow, as if regretting Alexander's clemency.

"He offered me service in King Philip's army and I accepting, he comes to make like offer to you, who now owe him obedience as your chief," Ossa answered with animation, casting his eyes over his followers.

"Service in Philip's army! Food for Theban crows! No, no; we will have none of it!" Prado answered scornfully, waving his hand toward his companions who stood staring, not knowing what to make of it all.

"What he wills, Prado, you must do. 'Power to the Strongest!' Such is our oath and the sacred law of our tribe," Ossa answered sternly.

"He overcome you by some trick, not in fair combat. He is not stronger or braver than I, and so I will not yield him obedience now, or at any time," Prado cried in scorn.

"No one shall follow me except of his free will. The King will have no traitors or cowards in his army," Alexander cried with ringing voice, incensed at the other's arrogance.

"Go your way; you will find no followers here. For we are free, not slaves, to be traded like Thracian mercenaries or Macedonian cattle," Prado cried in response, looking about him.

"Who made you leader, Prado, to speak for others?" Ossa cried with stern displeasure. "But come, my comrades," he went on, with more amiable voice, "hungry men know not what is for their good. Let us eat and sleep and tomorrow determine our minds. You, brave Prince, shall abide with us till then; for you could not, if

you would, descend the mountain side tonight. Share with us our food, and if it is less dainty than the King's it will nourish you none the less."

Leading the Prince within the cave, a vaulted room lighted with pots of flaming pitch met his gaze, its rough walls blackened with age and smoke. In its further extremity fires burned, and about them men busied themselves preparing the evening meal. Some were baking bread on the live coals while others turned the spits whereon were savory pieces of beef or game of different kinds. Near these and with his face buried in his hands, Alexander espied Lysimachus, overcome with grief and unconscious of all that had been said or done. Going to him, he put his arms about the old man's neck, saying in a coaxing voice:

"Cheer up, good master, your Prince has come to share your company and take you hence."

Hearing his voice Lysimachus lifted his head and, seeing Alexander, he arose tottering to his feet, but, overcome with grief, fell sobbing and trembling into the Prince's arms.

"Has my brave Achilles, my baby, been overcome by the base wretches? Oh sorry the hour, my master, that we parted from Clitus and the brave Companions!"

"Nay, I come not as a captive, but the guest of these sturdy men, good Lysimachus," the Prince answered reassuringly, "and so you are free to return to your companions when and how you like."

"How can that be, and you here, and alone?" the other answered, seeing none of Alexander's followers.

"It is enough that I tell you so. Dry your tears, and

tomorrow ere the sun is an hour high you shall be once more with your friends."

Supper being now prepared, all partook of the abundant fare, and afterwards, a bed of fragrant boughs being made ready for Alexander and Lysimachus, they lost no time in seeking the restful couch.

With the first glimpse of day, the bustle and preparation of the previous evening commenced anew. But soon, the morning meal being served and quickly eaten, Ossa summoned his followers to the wide-spreading rock, crying, so that all might hear:

"Yesterday, my comrades, in open field and fair combat, as I have told you, this brave Prince overthrew me and held me at his mercy. Defeated, I yielded leadership to him as his of right. Now, as our chief, he offers us absolvence and honorable service in the King's army. Through which freedom, if the Gods so will it," he went on with melancholy voice, "we may reclaim our wives and children from servitude and slavery. Thus we shall escape our wearisome and degraded life which has no ending save death or slavery. Trusting the brave and chivalrous Prince, I place myself by his side and appeal to you, my companions and kinsmen, to do the same," and concluding, Ossa, with flushed face, fell back beside the Prince, who stood gazing on the strange scene with curious and attentive eyes.

To this appeal there was no movement or word of response, each man standing still, looking steadfastly at Prado as if seeking his advice. At last, and with seeming reluctance, the disaffected outlaw, responding to the call, slowly pushed his way to the front of the gaping

throng. Looking to those about him for approval, and then turning his gaze on Ossa, he cried, in bitter scorn:

"Whether the Prince conquered in fair fight, or failing that, bewitched you, matters not. He is not the strongest as you say, and he who would rule must prove his worth, where all may see and judge. Is not that the law? Could there be any other?" he concluded, turning confidently to those about him.

"Yes, yes. If he be the strongest let him prove it," they responded with one voice, striking their weapons.

"Who is there among you who will do battle for supremacy already fairly won?" Ossa answered, as if in apology for their mutiny, his face black with rage.

"I! And overcoming him, will rule in your place," Prado cried, eyeing Alexander with derisive scorn. "But let the combat be as always, with naked sword and without shield of any kind."

"I accept the challenge, brave Ossa, and no one shall abide the issue if he be not so inclined," Alexander cried, his eyes aflame with anger at the other's insolence.

"Nay, you shall not fight the thief, good master," Lysimachus cried, hastening to Alexander's side. "It were a shame and mockery of your kingly rank. We will rather go our way and another day return and mete out the punishment these outlaws merit."

"Peace, Lysimachus! 'Tis but a trial of strength and skill, and I may not evade the proffered combat, or show less courage than another man," Alexander answered impatiently, removing his helmet and armor. Then taking the sword Ossa offered him, he advanced and awaited his opponent.

Prado showing no less resolution, hurried forward and in a moment the two confronted each other in the center of the great rock.

"Give room there!" Ossa cried with stern impatience, motioning and pushing his followers to the mouth of the cave.

When in this way the wide platform had been cleared, the combatants losing no time, advanced upon each other with furious eagerness. Stroke on stroke followed in hot haste, their weapons emitting sparks of fire as they clashed in mid-air in response to some fierce blow, or glided to and fro with parry and thrust. Thus the combat continued without advantage to either, while those who watched held their breath, awaiting the outcome of the struggle. After a while, Prado thinking himself the stronger and confident of victory, crowded forward, striving to beat down the blade of the other by skillful play, or wrest it forcibly from his hand. Alexander, slowly giving way, kept up such show of strength and skill of weapon that the other, try as he would, could by no means reach him with his blade. Angered and surprised, Prado grew more vehement, and the struggle increasing in fury, the clash of their swords rang out on the morning air, like the sharp beat of the blacksmith's anvil. Slowly backing away, as if unable to withstand the other's onslaught, Alexander, at last, having measured his opponent's skill, stood still. Then giving a moment's pause, he rushed upon his enemy, crying, "*For the King,*" and with such fierce determination and dexterity of stroke that the other, falling back, could do nothing more than defend himself against the deadly assault.

"The Prince is the better swordsman!" Ossa cried, watching Alexander's sword as it glistened in the early sunlight. "Prado, the poor devil, can do nothing but back and parry!"

"There is not the Prince's like in all Macedonia, unless it be Clitus, which I doubt," Lysimachus cried, tears of joy filling his worn eyes, as his young master drove the now frightened robber before him.

At last, crowding Prado to the verge of the cliff, Alexander, feigning, caught the other's extended sword with such strength and dexterity of wrist that the outlaw, losing hold of his weapon, it flew high in the air, dropping at his feet. The struggle over, Alexander turned about, and, raising his sword, saluted Ossa with a kindly smile. Seeing him thus unguarded, Prado, maddened with rage and shame, stooped down and grasping his weapon, rushed forward to thrust Alexander in the back. At this a cry of horror arose from those who watched, and Alexander divining the cause, sprang forward and so avoided the cowardly blow. Turning and taking fresh hold of his sword, he rushed upon the treacherous outlaw with a savage cry. Crowding him swiftly to the utmost verge of the cliff, he beat down his guard, and then, neither waiting nor giving quarter, buried his blade to the hilt in the other's breast. Feeling the stroke, Prado sprang back, and doing so, fell, with a despairing cry, headlong from the towering cliff. Seeing this, those who watched, taking no thought of the outlaw's fate, rushed forward and, falling on their knees, cried with one voice:

"Hail, chief and master!"

"If I be chief," Alexander cried in response, holding

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his weapon high aloft, "swear upon this sword, dyed with your comrade's blood, to be true servants of the King."

"We swear!" they exclaimed, each raising his weapon aloft.

The combat being thus happily terminated, Ossa lost no time in arranging for the departure of the band. While he was thus engaged Alexander, going to the edge of the cliff, looked down upon the quiet valley and the glistening river, seemingly no wider than a thread of silver. By its side, in the choked road, to his great astonishment, he presently discerned the Companion Cavalry standing still in confused and disordered ranks. Amazed at what he saw, he lifted a trumpet to his lips and blew the call "To arms." Then waiting while the soldiers stood still, looking about them in wonder, he thrice repeated the Prince's signal. This echoing and re-echoing from the mountain sides, reaching the waiting soldiers, gave them the joyful assurance that their Prince was near them and unharmed. Raising their weapons, they gave a mighty shout which, lifted in the still air, came at last to Alexander's ears like a faint whisper from the vale below. Turning to Ossa, he cried, as he hastened to don his armor:

"Quick, good Ossa, let us descend. Your companions can follow at their leisure."

"Nay, they are ready and waiting, to a man," Ossa answered, pointing with glowing face to the men who stood in slender column within the cave. "See, they come like skilled soldiers ready to take their places without instruction of any kind."

Smiling his pleasure, Alexander saluted them with his

sword, and turning about, lost no time in commencing the descent of the mountain. Reaching the spot where he had left his horse, Alexander greeted the gallant steed with a tender word as he sprang upon his back to continue the descent. Approaching the waiting column, the soldiers hailed his return with loud acclaim, gathering about him with tender love, as if he were their father. Smiling his thanks and waving his sword toward those who followed, he cried:

"See, comrades, I come not empty-handed, but with these loyal and true men for the King's army."

Responding with a shout, the wondering Companions greeted, with hearty welcome, their new and strange comrades. Giving directions to Ossa to lead his men on to the water's edge and there await his coming, Alexander placed himself at the head of the Companions, and giving the signal, set out at a gallop to meet and escort Roxana to the coast.

Calling Clitus to his side as they swiftly traversed the silent vale, Alexander exclaimed, with curiosity not unmixed with anger:

"How does it happen, Clitus, that instead of guarding the camp I find you here, loitering idly by the river bank?"

"I know not, oh Prince, save it was there we met the sibyl of the vale, and she, vanishing, ere her story was finished, we stood bewildered, not knowing which way to turn."

"The sibyl of the vale! Did she appear before you?"

"Yes, oh Prince. Going forward in the early dawn, uncertain what to do, we came upon her holding aloft a

flaming torch, and it being a night of dreams and woman foolishness, I halted, no way surprised at seeing her. At which, peering down from the rock that loomed above the road, she cried: 'He whom you seek sleeps not by the sea but on the mountain heights.' Then, ere I could gain further speech of her, she quenched her torch and vanished like a mist in the uncertain light."

"She has ever been a friend to the Macedonians, and more than once has warned our armies of foes awaiting them in the hidden recesses of these mountains. But how comes it that you were there instead of at Larissa as I commanded?" Alexander inquired with some impatience.

"It was all the doings of the Princess Roxana and by no will of mine," Clitus answered with confident assurance, as if knowing the excuse would find favor in his master's eyes.

"The Princess! What had she to do with it?"

"This, good master, and I know not if I did aright," Clitus responded, smiling grimly to himself. "But in the middle of the night I was awakened by a cry and, going to the door of my tent, found her there unattended, save by a female slave. Surprised out of my senses, I questioned her, and this was the story she told me: Retiring to her couch, worn with the fatigue of the day, she presently fell asleep, and, doing so, dreamed that she followed you as you descended into the valley. Midway of the vale, as she watched, you were set upon by a gigantic robber. Fighting with unequal strength of arm and weapon, you were at last overcome and led away into the depths of the mountain. Such was her story, and hear-

ing it, I laughed. At that, enraged, she burst into tears, crying out that if I did not go in search of you she would herself set out alone. At last frightened, I know not why, I donned my armor and gathering and arming these soldiers, set out as she commanded," Clitus concluded, eyeing the Prince as if to ask if any part of the dream were true.

"'Twas strange, Clitus, and a message from the preserving Gods," he answered, lifting his eyes to the snow-topped summit of Olympus. "For it was precisely as she dreamed, save that I overcame the robber chief instead, and he, swearing fealty to the King for himself and his followers, I went with him to accept their oath in person."

"Was the meeting a chance one, think you, oh Prince, or did the robber know of your coming?" Clitus asked, thinking of Mithrines' flying messenger.

"They were on the watch, good Clitus, but the contest ending as I say, no harm followed." And musing on what Clitus had said, his heart filled with rapture, Alexander spurred forward at topmost speed, impatient to meet and welcome his love.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SIBYL OF THE VALE.

Hurrying forward without slackening rein, Alexander came upon Eumenes and the marching column as it entered the picturesque vale. In its midst and surrounded by a guard of honor, the Persian envoys moved forward with stately dignity. As if in contrast, far in the rear, with pipe and song, the "Hungry Horde" came straggling on with joyful voice. Galloping to the side of Roxana, Alexander cried in rapture:

"Greeting and happiness, sweet Princess! I have returned to guide you through the enchanted valley lest, hurrying, you lose something of its beauty in the strangeness of the setting."

"Thanks, gentle Prince, I had not thought to see you again till we reached the coast," she answered, her voice and heightened color evincing her delight.

"So I told you, sweet being, but no sooner do I leave your presence than I turn about to retrace my steps, forgetful of all save being near you," he answered, leading her horse to one side to allow the column to pass.

While thus waiting, Mithrines, white of face, approached, half reclining in his seat. Looking down from the back of the dromedary and seeing them, he cried in scorn to Alexander:

"The Gods protect you now, but naught shall long put off the fateful hour!" and lifting himself he half

raised the javelin by his side as if to hurl it at his enemy; but, releasing the weapon, he passed on, his lowering face fixed in scowling hatred on the Prince and his companion.

"What new peril has this wretch contrived, Iskander?" Roxana cried in fear, as she drew her horse near to that of Alexander. "Say, sweet love, if my dream was true; and did Clitus reach your side in time?" she went on, grasping his hand as she recalled the events of the previous night.

"Let not your tender heart be disturbed, sweet love, with thoughts of Mithrines and his foolish boasting. Of your dream, Roxana, it was only true in part, your gentle love adding to the danger. Clitus, doing as you directed, reached my side and found me safe and unharmed as you see me now. But, come, let us not waste the sweet hour lest you lose some part of the picturesque vale, for you must know, dear heart, it has ever been the pride of Greece as it is the admiration of all men."

Advancing at an easy pace, Alexander cried as the valley narrowed:

"See how the overhanging mountains crowd upon the foaming river as it cuts its way between the granite walls. Such mighty effort puts to shame all the puny works of men."

"'Tis thus you ever put me off, Iskander, nor tell me aught you think," she answered sorrowfully, unable to dismiss her fears. But changing with the moment, as women will, she cast aside her fretful thoughts, and, grasping Alexander's hand, cried out: "Come, sweet love, I will sorrow no more, but delight with you in the beauty and strangeness of what we see."

And well she might, for in the presence of the majestic mountains the hopes and fears of men seemed trivial things. Yesterday she had viewed Olympus from a distance; now, beyond the foaming river, enveloped in fleecy clouds of spray, the great mountain reared its dizzy height. About its base and ascending walls the deep fissures and gloomy caverns that seamed its rugged front were clearly discernible to her astonished eyes. Nearer at hand, solitary cliffs projected their graceful heights far into the ambient air, a nesting place for birds. Upon the mountain side, far up, precipices and sombre canons, cut deep in the granite wall, dazed her eyes as she sought in vain to pierce their precipitous depths.

Such was Olympus, reverenced by the Greeks as the abode of the Gods. In its vast solitudes outlaws and slaves found a retreat secure from pursuit, as in after time pious hermits sought its hidden caverns in which to pass their days in fasting and prayer. Or later still, in the ages to come, its towering summits would become the abode of gloomy monasteries in which men would pass their lives in penitence and prayer. Or now, in the vast cycles of time, these having passed away like the others, the mountain and its projecting heights are once more given up to solitude and silence as in the beginning.

Gazing upward affrighted, Roxana exclaimed as she grasped Alexander's hand:

"The projecting heights, Iskander, tremble as if about to fall upon our heads," and turning, Ossa's projecting cliffs meeting her frightened gaze as they seemed to balance themselves, suspended in the air, she cried: "Come, Iskander, let us hasten, for my heart no longer beats

with fear of these overhanging mountains," and putting spurs to their horses they quickly reached a secluded part of the valley where greater breadth gave rest to her overwrought nerves.

"Stay, Iskander," she cried, as they reached a sylvan glade, belted about with stately trees. "In this quiet spot one might pass a lifetime and yet find it all too short —if their love were near," she added, seeking her companion's hand.

Carried away by the solitude and sweetness of the sylvan dell, Alexander threw his arms about Roxana and, kissing her with tender love, cried out with throbbing heart:

"Yes, 'tis as if sweet Nature, exhausting all her treasures, had here contrived an enchanted spot for those who love. Would it were our happy lot, Roxana, to pass our lives in sweet contentment amid such solitudes."

"It is among such heights and silent valleys as this, Iskander, that I live, and more like a shepherdess than aught else."

"I would you were such, and I a shepherd with naught beside my bleating flocks and your sweet presence."

"Why is it not that way, Iskander?" she asked with trembling voice. "Oh, what is to become of our trusting love amid the fierce wars and strivings of the great! Surely, it will have no ending but despair and death!"

"Say not so, sweet love. For as I shall have strength to govern when I become King, so shall I have strength to make you my Queen; and that naught may come between us, sweet love, let us pray to the Gods on yonder heights to fulfill, in this, our hearts' desire," and dis-

mounting and kneeling like trusting children they lifted their eyes to the majestic mountain in prayer that Zeus might grant them the happiness their hearts craved. "Now, sweet love," Alexander exclaimed, as they rose to their feet, "whatever may come, whether we be near each other or far apart, we shall ever know the other is true to our plighted troth."

"I will fear no longer, dear Iskander, nor deny my love its gentle impulse, but let it become my very life, or, if need be, the cloak that covers me when I die," she answered, throwing her arms about his neck and bursting into tears, as if, despite her words, the wide gulf that parted them was ever present to her confiding nature.

Thus these loving hearts plighted their faith anew, amid the stillness of the sylvan dell, in the shadow of the towering mountains.

Meanwhile the marching column, unmindful of Alexander and Roxana or their trusting love, kept on its way to the smiling sea. Thus it reached a spot in the congested valley where, Ossa crowding close upon the river, only a narrow path cut through the solid wall afforded a way for the passing column. Beside this the river, black as night, whirled in never-ending eddies about the deep inlet here worn in the side of the crumbling rock. Above a steep cliff arose, offering no foothold save where a jutting rock hung like an outstretched arm over the narrow road. Off this rock, in a deep cavern opening on the projecting spur, Arythrea, the sacred prophetess of Olympus, dwelt in solitude. Now, as the noisy throng drew near, all eyes beheld her with wonder or affright, as, emerging from the cave, she stood revealed

against the clear blue sky. Of noble features and commanding height, the sacred priestess looked the accepted oracle of Zeus that all knew her to be. About her meager arms and shrunken form she wore, as if in penitence, rude garments of wool and undressed goat-skins. Her dress, falling loosely about her majestic form, was girt at the waist with a belt of serpent skins, the heads of the loathsome reptiles dangling at her knees. Of covering for her head there was none, save the coarse gray hair which fell in disheveled masses over her neck and sloping shoulders.

To the marching soldiers she made no sign, but as the Persian nobles drew near she waved her hand as if commanding them to halt. Looking down on Oxyartes' wondering face, the prophetic spirit full upon her, she cried in a commanding voice:

"Hail, noble chieftain of the mountain heights! Go in peace and happiness, knowing thy honored name shall be placed above that of other men in thy country and shall be remembered so long as the deeds of this mighty age are treasured in the history of mankind."

Waving him to proceed, she looked down on Artabazus, as he came on with noble air, crying:

"All glory to thee, noble Persian, in the coming time, for thy exalted honor and steadfast loyalty to thy stricken King and crumbling empire. Go thy way, for though thy courage and constancy shall naught avail, they shall be remembered of thee so long as men regard virtue and honor."*

*This great nobleman remained steadfast to the Persian King throughout the latter's struggle to defend his country and crown. After the decisive defeat at Arbela he followed him to Ecbatana,

Waving Artabazus farewell, as she had the other, the eyes of the prophetess rested with sorrowing glance on the white face and recumbent figure of Mithrines. Looking up he cried with scoffing smile:

"What! Have you something with which to tickle my listening ear and swelling vanity, sweet nurse? Or is your message of a sombre hue, and therefore more likely to be true?"

"Rail not, presumptuous man, accursed of Gods and men!" she answered with sorrowing voice.

"Accursed, you say?" he answered, holding up his jeweled hands in vain derision. "Look these like curses or blessings?" he went on, flashing the sparkling gems. "Out with the story, beldam, nor delay the march, for I see you are near to bursting with splenetic humor."

"Scoff not at the Gods, betrayer of thy countrymen and willing slave of the Persian tyrant. He, too, thou shalt betray, and yet another and a nobler master. But vainly, for thy treachery disclosed thou shalt end thy days, not in honor, but outstretched on Pera's rocky citadel. There, while thy parched lips shall cry mercy for men murdered and betrayed, hungry vultures shall fight for thy rotting flesh ere thy dimmed and sorrowing eyes are closed in death."

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the last of the Persian capitals to surrender. Nor did he desert him when it became necessary for Darius to flee from this last stronghold on Alexander's approach. Commanding a troop of fifteen hundred men he continued in attendance on the great King until he was crowded to one side by Bessus and his fellow conspirators before they put Darius to death on the Parthian plain. Then, turning to one side to avoid Alexander's pursuing army, he awaited on neutral territory the termination of the great struggle.

"When, oh dragon of the air, shall all this come to pass?" Mithrines cried, paling at the sibyl's words, but preserving still his scornful front.

"Ere time has dimmed thy cunning eyes or cooled thy poisoned blood, weak man. But all too long, though nothing thou plannest shall come to pass save the betrayal of trusts bestowed on thee. No! Not more fruitful than the vain efforts of yonder grinning corpse which, living, sought to do thy evil offices," and pausing, she pointed her bony finger at the bloated form of Mithrines' attendant which slowly floated with upturned visage in the black waters at her feet. "See! he comes to confront thee in thy pride and wickedness as a warning from the Gods," she went on as Mithrines gazed down at the loathsome object with blanched face and shrinking form.

"Of that other one," she continued, "whom thou sent hither but yesterday on an errand of death, his mission, like the others, came to naught, and if thou wouldst be sure, go seek him by yonder curling smoke, where thou shalt find his scattered bones, a prey to the devouring wolves. Go, vain man!" she cried with majestic air, holding her staff aloft, "and pray the Gods that thy life may be cut short ere the things I have told thee come true."

Uttering a curse, Mithrines struck the dromedary a cruel blow, but proceeding, his eyes followed the floating corpse, which, slowly circling in the eddying water, seemed to point him out as the betrayer of his kind. And to give this greater semblance of truth, as the body was at last sucked down by the whirling pool, the head suddenly lifted and, with arms extended, stared at him from

out its glazed and sunken eyes. Thus it slowly disappeared in the black waters, its shining teeth glistening between the swollen lips, giving to the face an air of such fiendish glee that Mithrines, uttering a curse, fell back on his couch as if stricken with death.

"Heard you what the sibyl said?" Clitus asked with pale face and open mouth, turning to Lysimachus, as they followed close upon Mithrines' heels. "Is there truth in such prophecies, think you?"

"'Twere blaspheming the Gods to doubt it," Lysimachus answered, his eyes turned toward Olympus.

"She seemed to foretell the very things men talk about; the downfall of Sardis and the destruction of the Persian Empire."

"She needs not the gift of prophecy to foretell that if Alexander leads the way," Lysimachus answered, as if his master were already seated on the throne of the great King.

"See, Lysimachus," Clitus cried, pointing to the body of Mithrines' attendant, as with hideous gravity it stood half upright in the whirling waters. "'Tis as the sibyl said."

"What meant she, Clitus? Did Mithrines murder him?" the other asked with pale cheeks, as he looked down on the repulsive object.

"Nay, 'twas but a figure of speech foretelling the fate of Mithrines and his creatures," Clitus answered, evading the question as he rode on with downcast head.

Alexander and Roxana presently nearing the overhanging rock, and he espying the sibyl, called to his companion, saying:

"See yonder majestic and lonely figure, sweet love! 'Tis Arythrea, the prophetess of the vale."

"Can she truly foretell the things that are to come, think you?"

"So it is said and everywhere believed."

"Will she have aught to say to us, think you?" Roxana asked, as if it were a thing to be avoided.

"I know not, but when last I passed she looked down on me in silence. When I would have stopped she waved me on, as if to some good fortune, and so it happily turned out," he went on, thinking of Cheronea. "Today she seems in less pleasant mood, and, see! she beckons us to halt."

"Hast thou nothing to ask of me, sweet Prince? Neither thou nor thy fair companion?" the sibyl cried as Alexander and Roxana stood still with upturned faces. "Wouldst thou not know what the future has in store for thee, great Prince? Thou with the yellow hair and uplifted head, fearing naught save the Gods."

"No, sacred mother, I seek not to know the future. Give me the present hour of happiness and the hope that, dying, I may still clasp this hand in mine," Alexander answered, pressing Roxana's fingers to his lips.

"Thy end shall be as thou sayest, sweet Prince, and thus thy simple wish is granted thee. But the Gods permit not such as thee, however they may be inclined, to go forward in life without knowledge of what is in store for them," she answered, restraining him with her wand.

"What, think you, have the Gods in store for me, good mother?" Roxana interposed, as if impatient to know her fate, be it what it might.

"Everything that women crave and men honor, sweet being," the sibyl responded. "For in the days to come thy name shall rise like a meteor in the far east, and fixing itself in the heavens shall dwell beside the star of him who sits beside thee. Such is thy destiny, fair maiden; seek to know no more."

"I would not if I could, for 'tis all and more than I could ask," Roxana answered, tears dimming her soft eyes as she lifted Alexander's hand to her lips in tender caress.

"See, sweet love, how idle your fears, for your life and mine are forever one. 'Tis thus the Gods decree," Alexander cried, clasping his arm about her trembling form.

"Of thee, great Prince, thy life belongs to the ages. The world proclaims thee and men already hail thy rising fortune. Ere two harvests shall pass, thy star, shooting heavenward, shall be beheld of men for all the coming time. Fear not, for neither poison, nor dagger, nor battle dangers, shall strike thee down. So thou shalt go on till thy destiny is fulfilled and thou art known no more save in the annals of mankind. But of her beside thee, not till thou art more Persian than Greek canst thou proclaim her Queen of thy lofty throne. Then the splendor of thy fame shall envelop her and all the world shall pay her reverence as to a Goddess," and, lifting up her arms to the sacred mountain as if blessing those before her, she slowly turned and entered the open cavern.

Clasping his companion in his arms as the sibyl vanished, Alexander cried:

"Hail, Queen of my heart and throne!"

But she, tenderly embracing him, answered naught, and thus they rode on in silence, pondering on what the prophetess had said. At last, emerging from the sequestered vale, they came upon the open sea, its surface glistening in the sunlight like disks of polished silver.

"See, sweet love, the ships await our coming," Alexander cried, pointing to the vessels anchored in the little bay.

"Yes, while we have loitered, like truant children, everything has been made ready for our departure," Roxana answered, as she saw the loaded vessels and waiting sailors.

"Clitus has not given the soldiers time to breathe the refreshing air, ere hurrying them and their belongings aboard the ships. No wonder the soldiers love him, and the King not less!" Alexander cried with beaming eyes.

"At Ephesus our officers were a week doing what Clitus has accomplished in so short a time," Roxana answered with a sigh, thinking of the supineness of her countrymen.

"Thus Clitus has been taught by the King, and so it is that our army comes always upon the enemy unprepared," Alexander answered as if he had learned the lesson well.

"I pray that your brave soldiers and those of the great King may never come together except in friendship," Roxana answered with foreboding voice.

"Bactria is far away, sweet love, and if destiny leads our armies there, those you love will then be more free and honored than under Persia's rule."

"Oh, Iskander, you look only on the thing that is hap-

piest and best for us," she answered, bending over and kissing his extended arm.

"Would you have it otherwise, sweet love? For if I were less fixed in my resolve, what hope that I should ever govern Macedon and its rugged people? Like my father, every adverse thing shall yield, and so at last you shall share my throne as you now share my heart," he cried, exalted, clasping her yielding hand with fervent love and hope.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LYBIAN KING.

Alexander and Roxana reaching the shore, Clitus welcomed them, exclaiming, as he sniffed the salt air, that the ships were ready to weigh anchor.

"Give orders, then, for our departure, if the augur's report be favorable," Alexander answered, for in that age, it must be remembered, nothing was attempted by the Greeks if the omens were not propitious.

"It foretells good fortune, oh Prince. Examining the entrails of the slaughtered victim, Evenius found them perfect, but as he held the throbbing heart in his open hand it emitted a fountain of blood, covering his sacred person."

"What does he presage from that?" Alexander asked attentively.

"A bloody conflict, good Prince."

"A conflict! And with whom?" Alexander exclaimed incredulously, Macedonia being then at peace with all her neighbors.

"With the pirates who infest the coast like rats about a deserted fortress."

"The King long since swept the gulf of all such pests."

"Yes, but only to return like vultures," Clitus cried, elated at the prospect of battle and the spoils of victory.

"If what you say is true, 'tis a thing to be looked to. But from whence heard you this?"

"From the sailors; and taking their word I have distributed the soldiers among the ships so that each may bear his share of the burden."

"That is like the skillful soldier you are. While I have dallied you have acted," Alexander answered, smiling upon the other.

"Nay, I deserve no praise, having done only what the captains advised."

"Where have you placed Ossa and his followers?"

"On the Delphos, the quadrireme; she with the four banks of oars," Clitus answered, pointing to the noble vessel.

"There I will go with the Persian embassy. You, Clitus, take command of a trireme, and Eumenes of the other. Ptolemy, Antigonus and Seleucus will each command one of the biremes," Alexander directed, scanning the fleet.

The arrangement being thus perfected, the Prince lost no time in escorting Roxana to the waiting barge, and the sailors, bending to their oars, soon brought them to the side of the stately vessel. Mounting the wooden ladder, Alexander hastened to make such provision for his guests as the noble ship afforded. Oxyartes and Roxana, in especial honor, he placed in the gilded cabin beneath the steersmen, it being the most commodious and least exposed place should danger threaten the vessel.

Having performed this act of hospitality, he sought Roxana and led her to a retired part of the deck, there to await the departure of the fleet. Nor was it long, for scarce had he shown himself than Clitus, giving the signal to weigh anchor, the vessels were in a moment

under way. Reaching the open sea, the ships took precedence according to their strength, the Delphos taking the lead and the triremes, with their three banks of oars and lesser force, following on. Behind these the biremes, with two banks of oars, came in their turn. Still back of these, with some regard to order, came the shallow transports with the baggage and slaves and the "Hungry Horde," these last filling the air with their pipes and jovial songs.

As the fleet turned its face to the north with uplifted sails, Roxana, laying hold of Alexander and looking to her father, exclaimed:

"If nothing more should come of our mission than what has already happened, surely we are every way repaid for the long journey."

"Let us hope, rather, sweet child, that its pleasures are but an omen of success at Pella," Oxyartes answered, his mind concerned with his embassy.

"Let us believe that it is so, dear father, for at Pella we shall have one true friend to frankly welcome us," Roxana answered, the color mounting to her face.

"Of whom do you speak, my child?" Oxyartes asked, surprised.

"Who else, father, but Alexander, the crown Prince?" she answered, catching her breath.

"Nay, simple child, 'tis a foolish thought. The ambition of Philip, the conquering King, is but a summer's dream, 'tis said, to Alexander's love of arms and greed of conquest. Already the aspiring Prince bemoans his fate that the King will leave him no worlds to conquer. It is from him, sweet child, that Persia has most to fear,

for Philip will not pursue the venture far, being occupied at home, but nothing can stay the hand of Alexander, once he enters Asia."

"Yes! I will stay his hand if need be," she answered confidently, gazing into the face of Alexander, her own afire. "For this brave Prince beside you, father, is Alexander, and to him my vows of love are plighted, never to be severed save by death. 'Tis to him I look for deliverance from the threatened peril," she went on in an agitated voice.

Startled out of himself, and mindful of what he had said, Oxyartes stood trembling, overwhelmed by his conflicting emotions. Gaining the mastery, he would have fallen upon his knees before the sovereign Prince had not Alexander stayed him, exclaiming:

"I know not the policy of the King, and I can but follow where he leads, but for yourself, brave Prince, you have naught to fear; and this I pledge you in the King's name," he concluded, placing his arm about the other's body.

"Thanks, most noble Prince; I could expect no less from you. But it is for Persia that I am here, to avert, if I may, the mighty war that threatens her. 'Tis for this that my King sends me, and it is this that engages all my thoughts," Oxyartes answered with deep emotion.

"For the King I can give no pledge, gracious Prince," Alexander answered with grave concern. "Nor for myself being King, for it is not given to men to stay the hand of destiny; but for yourself and those you love, I pledge you peace and honor. Of Roxana," he went on,

grasping her hand, "'tis as she has said, and I, having won her as a soldier, would wear her as a King."

To this Oxyartes could for a long time make no answer, his eyes filling with tears. At last gaining voice, he exclaimed, a sob filling his throat:

"King Philip, your father, generous Prince, will stand opposed to such union with all his strength. To him it will appear a shameful mesalliance, and if you persist he will name another to succeed him. For such a marriage fits not with his great ambition or hopes of you," Oxyartes went on, convinced of the truth of all he said.

"No one shall cheat me of the crown. King of right, no power shall keep me from the throne when Philip dies," Alexander cried with flaming eyes, as if already facing the dire emergency.

While they were thus discussing the future, fraught with so many perils, the ships responding to outstretched sail and measured oar, approached within the shadow of the Sacred Mountain. Nearing a headland on which a forest grew, the sailors who watched saw, at first with curiosity and then dismay, slender columns of smoke ascending from the hidden ground.

"'Twas thus in former days the pirates were wont to convey information of passing ships," Alexander exclaimed, turning to the captain, who was attentively regarding the ascending smoke.

"Such is still their custom, it would appear, oh Prince," the other replied, not taking his eyes off the shore. "See! There are as many columns as we have armed ships. Could better proof be asked?"

"Look, oh Prince, 'tis a signal to the waiting pirates,"

Clitus cried, elated, from the prow of his vessel, pointing to the ascending smoke.

Turning to the captain, convinced of the truth of what was told him, Alexander cried:

"Hasten and signal the ships to lose no time in preparing for battle."

Doing as he was told, the captain hurried to his post and soon the clang of armor and note of preparation was heard throughout the fleet, telling that the command had been obeyed. Leaving Roxana in care of her father, Alexander hastened to join the captain, and soon, on the distant horizon, a fleet with all sails set could be plainly seen coming rapidly into view.

"It is Bordollis, the Lybian, as I thought. See his crimson sails, which he cares not to hide," the captain exclaimed with animation.

"I knew not till an hour ago that pirates still frequented the coast," Alexander answered absently as he strove to make out the strength of the approaching fleet.

"Yes, while the King concerns himself with the Grecian war, and his ships hover about the Athenian fleet, Bordollis ravages our borders with bloody hand."

"How many do you make out?" Alexander asked, unable to determine the number of the enemy.

"Twenty, if I count aright; ten triremes and as many biremes. They come on like sea-gulls, their sharp prows parting the water like a knife blade."

"This pirate goes to sea in stately array and as a king might lead an army," Alexander exclaimed, scanning the fleet with eager eyes.

"He is a king, oh Prince, but his country being but a

speck on the Lybian shore he ekes out his slender revenues by piracy, as you see."

"As many others have done with less excuse," Alexander answered, remembering the tolerance with which piracy was regarded by the world.

"And as they will continue to do, so long as half-savage men love gain," the captain responded, straining his eyes to make out the movements of the approaching fleet.

"They draw apart to form a crescent, the better to envelop our lesser number. Signal the commanders to close in, forming a wedge behind our ship, the transports falling back," Alexander cried, observing the enemy extend his lines.

"'Tis our only hope of victory," the other responded soberly.

Leaving the captain, Alexander hastened to inspect the armament of the ship and make provision for the coming battle. Ossa and his sturdy band he found armed and waiting on the upraised platform of the middle ship, where they were available for attack or defense. Bidding them conceal themselves behind the protecting walls, he ascended to the iron cages that encircled the strong masts. These, as he expected, he found filled with armed men and beside them missiles and pots of pitch ready to hurl upon the approaching enemy. Reaching the prow of the vessel, its covered way was supplied in like manner with needed arms for the waiting soldiers. Near them missiles and balls of pitch lay about the rude machine that stood at hand in readiness to project them upon the advancing enemy. Looking down from the prow of the vessel, its ram, sheathed with bronze, stood outstretched

in the clear water like the nose of some cruel monster. On the ship's front, in ornamentation, an eagle perched its extended wings, and back of it, on either side, images of tigers displayed their length with open mouths and glistening teeth. Visiting the sides of the noble vessel, he found its protected way stored with darts and javelins and filled with armed men who stood silently awaiting the coming combat. Descending to the hold, Alexander traversed the narrow galleries whereon the rowers sat, four deep in ranks, one above the other. Captives and slaves, chained to their benches, the faces of the unhappy creatures wore a stolid look as of men without enterprise or hope, doomed to a life of degrading servitude. Of these, the more robust filled the upper benches, where the long and carefully balanced oars needed greater strength of arm and body. Scrutinizing the despairing men with pitying eyes, they heeded him not, but turned away their faces with looks of sullen discontent. Taking his stand with lofty front where all could see and hear, he cried with clarion voice:

"Comrades! Grecians!—Alexander, Prince and lover of brave men, speaks to you. He thinks not of birth or fortune in the stress of battle. For your unhappy state he mourns as for fellow-men. At last your hour has struck. Bordollis, the pirate chief, with twenty sail, bears down upon us; the stronger, we may conquer if we fight with courage and one mind. For battles ever fall to those who sustain the right and strive courageously for victory. To you, men of sorrow, victims of our internal wars," he went on, his voice ringing out like a bugle call,

"I grant freedom in the King's name, from the hour Bordollis yields."

Hearing him, the sullen men sat still, astonishment and joy depriving them of utterance. Then, amidst the clang of their chains and the sobs that burst from their throats, as the thought of freedom stirred their hearts, a great shout went up that filled the ship and surrounding sea. Saluting them with uplifted sword, Alexander hurried away to carry like assurance to the other vessels of the fleet. Thus he went on, cheers and cries of happiness following him from ship to ship, as he carried the glad message of freedom to the enslaved and despairing men.

Returning, elated at the act of mercy, he hastened to Roxana's side and, saluting her, cried out:

"Come with me, sweet Princess, and you, Demetrius, to the secure room set apart for sacred offices. There no harm can reach you. You, too, Lysimachus, come with us," he went on, observing the scared face and trembling form of his aged teacher.

"I would don armor and fight by your side, brave Achilles," Lysimachus answered, with quavering voice; "not be cooped up with women and children."

"Don your armor, then, if you will, and so defend the Princess, with these brave youths," he answered, running his eyes over the waiting pages. "Or if we be overcome," he went on, addressing Demetrius aside, "let not the Princess fall alive into Bordollis' hands."

"Think not of me in this hour of danger, Iskander," Roxana cried, knowing his thoughts were of her, "for if you fall I will not survive you. Go, sweet love, for I

already see you victorious and the enemy in flight," and, pulling down his face, she kissed him with confiding love. Returning the sweet caress, he lifted his hand in stern admonition to Demetrius and the others as he hurried from the room. Reaching the deck, he met Oxyartes, accompanied by Artabazus and Bessus, each armed and clad in steel.

"We come, oh Prince," Oxyartes exclaimed, "to offer you our swords. In this dire struggle 'tis a happy chance that we fight in a common cause."

"We have not many swords," Artabazus interposed, "but all are at your command. Place us where you will."

"Mithrines is missing from our number," Bessus exclaimed, bowing low, "but not willingly. Striving to put on his armor despite our remonstrances, he fell in a dead faint from weakness, and so lies helpless in his bed."

Thanking them in the King's name, Alexander bade them stay where they were, the better to guard the Princess, or, if mishap occurred, to be at hand to make such disposition as need be. To this they assenting, he hurried to the prow of the vessel, where the captain stood scanning the approaching enemy.

"They change their order of battle, drawing their ships together in a mass, hoping to run us down," Alexander exclaimed, observing Bordollis' new formation. "I like that better, for thus we can reach them the quicker. See! they lower their sails for attack, the yellow fiends crowding the deck as if all Lybia were here. Ah, there goes Bordollis' emblem, blood-red with upright sword and flaming torch. Brave King! You show your colors gallantly."

Everything being now in readiness, Alexander turned about and surveyed his compact fleet, whereon only scattered sailors were visible to the eye. Satisfied with what he saw, he raised his sword as the signal of battle and the order to display the Macedonian standard. At this the trumpeter, raising his bugle to his lips, gave the shrill order to advance. And now the ships coming within striking distance, the Macedonian bowmen and darters showing themselves, let fly clouds of arrows and javelins into the thick ranks of the eager enemy. Approaching still nearer, missiles and balls of burning pitch were thrown in quick succession on the crowded decks of the pirate fleet. Directing his ship's course, Alexander sought to ram Bordollis' vessel, but the latter, turning swiftly to one side, evaded the deadly stroke. Missing the mark, the Delphos, shooting forward, struck with crushing blow the ship that followed in the pirate's wake. Splitting it asunder, it went down with all its crew ere the assailing vessel could wholly free itself from the entangled mass. Backing away, the darters swept the decks of the surrounding ships with flying missiles, while balls of burning pitch were hurled upon the vessels further off. Beating back the ships that threatened him, the Delphos, forging slowly ahead, lay at last beside that of the pirate chief. Leaving Ossa to give battle to the enemy on the other side, Alexander gave the signal to board the ship of the Lybian King. Standing expectant with uplifted sword, he sprang upon the enemy's deck as the ships crashed heavily together. Uttering the fierce war-cry of their country, the Companions followed, and in a moment the air was filled with the clash of arms and fierce cries

of the combatants. Gaining a foothold, the long swords of the Companions swept the air as they struck down the weapons of opposing foes or forced a way into the enemy's ranks. Spreading out with the precision of trained soldiers, that each might have room in which to ply his weapon, the pirate crew fighting in a mass, could by no means stay their progress. Outnumbering the Macedonians, new men seemed to rise from the planks to take the places of those who fell. Bordollis, fighting in the fore of his vessel, seeing Alexander at the other extremity of the ship, pushed his way forward to confront him. The Prince, recognizing the Lybian King by his towering height and blood-red plume, disregarding all others, sought in like manner to reach his enemy. Sweeping aside those who stood in their way, the two at last confronted each other in the middle of the deck. Uttering a savage cry, they rushed forward, their glittering weapons meeting midway in the air. Thus they fought with fierce determination, oblivious of all around them, but without advantage to either. At last, Bordollis, being the taller and stronger, unable to reach his enemy, sought to beat down Alexander's defense by greater strength and reach of arm. But the latter, being the better swordsman, turned his weapon aside and, taking advantage of the opening, sprang forward, piercing the other's breast. But the blow doing no harm save to arouse Bordollis, the latter, rushing in anew, with mighty stroke sought to cut his enemy down. Springing back, Alexander evaded the blow and in return touched the mailed front of his enemy with his blade. Unable to strike an effective blow and filled with rage, he sprang

forward, crowding the other back with fast and furious play of weapon, but without harm to the Lybian King. Alexander, staying his hand, in turn gave way as if exhausted or grievously hurt. Bordollis, seeing this, crowded upon him with eager haste, upon which the Prince, lunging, fell suddenly as if stricken, upon his bended knee. At this, the Lybian, believing he had received a mortal hurt, rushed on with uplifted sword to put an end to the struggle; but Alexander, anticipating the blow, leaped forward ere the other's weapon fell, and crying "For the King!" plunged his sword in Bordollis' body. Stricken with death, the pirate chief still sought to strike his enemy down, but Alexander, grappling him about the waist, hurled him to one side, withdrawing his weapon with the action. At this the blood and entrails of Bordollis bursting from the gaping wound, he could no longer hold himself aloft. Seeing that death approached, he lifted himself and poising his ponderous blade hurled it full at Alexander's head. But the latter, evading the blow, stood still, watching in pity the dying chief as, striving to stay himself, he at last fell forward and expired.

Engaging anew with the enemies about him, the struggle went on until the pirate crew, losing hope, slowly retreated to the ship's side. Here, offering some slight resistance, they turned suddenly about and sprang into the sea, hoping thus to gain the side of some friendly vessel. Springing forward, Alexander struck down Bordollis' standard, but while the air yet rang with the cry of victory he lifted his sword aloft to his companions to follow. Returning to his own ship he found two of the enemy's

vessels grappled to its side. Ossa and his companions, unable to make head against the double force, fought at the ship's side, keeping those opposed at bay, but accomplishing nothing more.

Looking down on the enemy, Alexander beheld a sight that thrilled him to the heart, for in the midst of the pirate crew, back to back, the Persian nobles fought, their swords flashing like streams of light as they defended themselves or struck down an opposing foe. Amidst the wild confusion and clash of arms the pipes of the "Hungry Horde" suddenly smote upon Alexander's ear, and while he looked, amazed, the sturdy forms of these masterless men showed above the side of the pirate's ship. Reaching the deck, they lost no time, and without order or command of any kind charged on the astonished foe with such weapons as they had. Cheered by what he saw, Alexander turned to his own ship and in its center beheld Roxana standing alone, watching her father as he struggled in the midst of the savage foe. Angered, he looked about for Demetrius and his companions, to discover them fighting, with sturdy mien, beside Ossa and his brave companions. Behind them, in futile war, as if in burlesque, Lysimachus, with shrill cries, struck fierce and ineffectual blows at the enemy over the heads of those before him. In the midst of the pages, to Alexander's great distress, he saw Hephestion, without cover, fighting sword in hand, the blood streaming from his unhealed wounds. Stirred at the sight, he called to Ossa to board the forward vessel, while he, raising his sword to the Companions, sprang upon the deck of the hindmost ship. Beating back those who stood in their front, the

Companions raised their fierce war-cry and, spreading out, cut down and scattered those before them. The pirate crew, assailed in the rear by the "Hungry Horde" and Persian nobles, crowded to one side, defending themselves as best they could, neither giving nor asking quarter. But at last, their leader falling, they turned and mounting the ship's side, leaped into the sea. Giving a cry of victory, Alexander and those about him sprang upon the forward ship, but the pirate crew, seeing the overthrow of their friends, sought not to defend themselves, but, throwing down their weapons, turned like the others and plunged into the sea.

Thus freed, Alexander, calling to his followers with sound of trumpet, returned to his own ship, urging it forward to where the conflict still continued. Seeing this the pirates, disheartened at the fall of their chief and the dreadful havoc of the conflict, hoisting all sails steered for the open sea. Turning about, Alexander signaled the fleet to follow, but not one responded, his vessel alone proving to be unharmed. Pursuing the enemy, he quickly overhauled the pirate fleet, and seeing this the crews of the hindmost vessels threw down their arms and falling upon their knees sought their pursuers' mercy. Sending soldiers to take possession of the ships and bidding them spare those who yielded, Alexander kept on his way till night and the widely scattered enemy rendered further pursuit impossible.

Turning about, Alexander lost no time in rejoining his companions, whom he found busied with the care of the dead and wounded. Summoning his barge, he hastened to the different ships, freeing the slaves and bestowing

everywhere a word of praise or loving inquiry. Returning at last to his own vessel, and the others presently gathering about its side, the newly liberated bondsmen, with the others standing on the bloody decks, hailed him conqueror with continuous cheers of welcome and acclaim. Tears filling his eyes and choking his utterance, he lifted his plumed helmet in grateful thanks. Seeing this, all with one accord taking up the pæan of victory and praise, the wide expanse was filled with the volume and melody of the glad song. Afterwards, bringing forth the sacred altar and placing it upon the upraised platform of the ship where all could see the sacred fire, sacrifice was offered by Alexander to Poseidon, the God of the Sea, for their deliverance from death. This being completed and everything being presently in readiness, the ships were turned toward the shore, where they were at last anchored for the night.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LION HUNT.

Early the succeeding morning the liberated slaves, arraying themselves in linen tunics, hastened to the mainland, as if only thus could they be sure that they were free. Satisfied, they gave themselves up to joyful play, running and leaping in glad abandonment like children freed from the tyranny of school. Soon the recollection of the past recurring to them, a stadium was formed and its boundaries marked. Here the younger and more fleet of foot sought to outrival each other in running the prescribed distance, while the more stalwart and strong of arm threw the discus in eager rivalry. Ruder men, emulous of the others, tried their skill and strength in wrestling, or competed for mastery with bow and arrow. Those who had once been soldiers or followers of the sea, taking ground apart, fought mimic battles, or, erecting targets, tried their skill anew with javelin and lance. Those of melancholy mind threw themselves down beside the murmuring sea to gaze on Olynthus' desolate sight, from whence, long years before, they had been so cruelly wrested.

The hardy soldiers, unable to sleep in the cramped quarters of the ships, had formed a camp beneath the spreading trees, and here the lofty tent of Alexander stood. But now, the morning being somewhat advanced

and he having returned to the ship to seek Roxana, his tent was deserted save for Demetrius, who sat beneath the silken canopy burnishing the helmet of his master.

"Why waste your time, brave youth, on that seamed and battered casque?" Clitus cried derisively as he approached.

" 'Tis a gift I begged of the Prince, and so a thing to be prized," Demetrius responded, intent upon his work.

"I thought not of its value as a relic, and you do well to keep it as a memento of the stirring day."

"Yes, it tells the story of the battle and the Prince's part," Demetrius replied, scanning the now glistening casque with admiring eyes. "Some day, when I can wear it, I will have these cuts filled with molten gold, all save this," he added, pointing to one near the edge of the helmet. "See, 'twas a wicked stroke, and had it been a little lower our joy would now be turned to tears and cries of sorrow."

"Because of that I would the sooner hide it, lest, seeing it always, I lost the favor of the Gods for cursing the dead pirate."

"Such cursing would avail little, Clitus, for 'twas not a pirate who aimed the blow."

"Eye of Cyclops! 'Twas a careless friend who handled his weapon thus loosely. But so it often happens that the flying lance wounds or kills a comrade ere it reaches the hated foe," Clitus answered philosophically.

" 'Twas not a lance that hit the casque, but an arrow tipped with steel, as you may see," Demetrius answered, holding up the helmet.

"Therefore the more likely to go astray," Clitus re-

sponded, as if no one could be rightly held responsible for a thing so uncertain as the flight of an arrow.

"This was shot by no friendly hand, good Clitus. Nor did it go astray, save that striking too high it pierced the Prince's helmet instead of the armor about his throat," Demetrius answered, handing the casque to Clitus.

Staring blankly, the blood rushed to Clitus' face and throat as he cried: "Who then drew the bow, if, hitting the mark, the arrow was not shot by a pirate's hand?"

"Mithrines' creature and no one else," Demetrius answered shortly. "See the bow of Thracian make, and here the arrow."

"Mithrines' creature!" Clitus exclaimed, astonished. "Give both to me, for they may serve a second time," he went on grimly as he examined the deadly weapon.

"Be more ready than I, Clitus, lest another time the miscreant's stroke may not miscarry."

"Fear not, brave youth, but tell me how it chanced that you were watching when the creature sought to kill the Prince?"

"Do not cry out so, Clitus, for our master will have nothing said or done that can give Oxyartes pain," Demetrius answered, looking away to the stately ship where Alexander and Roxana stood, hand in hand, gazing upon the animated scene.

"You are a wise youth in your day, Demetrius, and fitly chosen for a place about the Prince's person. But go on, and low, lest the very grasshoppers hear our speech and spread the news."

"When Bordollis' ships drew near, the Prince, summoning the pages, bade us guard the Princess in the sacred

room. To this arrangement she assented, but no sooner did we touch the pirate ship than all was changed. Hearing the Prince's war-cry as he sprang upon Bordollis' deck, she turned upon us with such a burst of scorn and passion as I never heard before from woman's lips. 'Is it for such cowardly service,' she screamed, 'that you were bred? Do gallant men stand idly about a worthless woman when others fight for life and honor? For shame! for know you I fear not the strife of battle more than the sun's heat. Come, then, if you be fit to breathe in woman's presence or live in men's regard,' and pushing us aside, she mounted to the upper deck, we following, shame-faced, as if we had done some unmanly thing."

"I would not have believed it of the soft thing," Clitus murmured, looking away to where the Princess stood beside the Prince.

"Reaching the deck, her eye sought out the Prince and seeing his waving plumes and gleaming sword she smiled; but while she looked her eyes fell on Mithrines' slave as he fitted a feathered arrow to his bow. No sooner did she spy him than, turning to me, she cried in terror: 'Quick! fly to his side, Demetrius, and see that he does no treacherous thing.' "

"If she fear not battle, the sweet thing has yet a woman's tender heart."

"Flying to do as she commanded, I was yet too late to stay the wretch's hand. But ere he could fit another arrow to his bow, reaching his side, I drew my sword and thrust him through the body."

" 'Twas a gallant blow, brave youth. But the Princess? What did she do next?"

"Calling me to her, she placed this chain of gold about my neck, and taking me in her arms kissed me on both my cheeks," Demetrius responded, blushing.

"I would it had been me," Clitus exclaimed aside.

"Then looking about her and seeing Ossa contending against a double force, she cried: 'Quick, brave youths, hasten to aid him in the unequal strife,' and smiling on us as we hurried away, she took her station in the middle ship, where she watched the conflict till it closed."

"Fit mate for Prince or King," Clitus cried in admiration. "But softly, Demetrius; put by the battered casque, for here comes the Prince and the sweet Roxana."

"Greeting, brave Clitus!" Alexander cried as he approached. "Two vessels captured and a third burned to the water's edge bear evidence of your skill and bravery. I know not," he went on, turning to the Persian envoys, as he embraced the sturdy soldier, "whether he be greater on land or sea."

"The poorest do well when led by so brave a Prince," Clitus answered with modesty.

"You were skilled in war, Clitus, ere I could hurl a javelin or draw a bow. But come, it is agreed, in recompense for yesterday's fatigue, that today be given up to the pleasure of the chase. Hasten, then, good Clitus, to make the needed preparations," the Prince directed as he turned to the Persian envoys, exclaiming: "What say you, noble Persians, will you join us in the exciting sport?"

"Thanks, courteous Prince, 'twill be as if we were once more in our own country," Oxyartes cried, his face lighting up with pleasure.

"I promise you such adventure as may be found in the mountains of Bactria or the wilds of the Sacean country, if we be fortunate in our quest," Alexander exclaimed with animation.

"That we can hardly hope for, oh Prince," Artabazus answered courteously, "unless, indeed, our Asiatic lion haunts the forests about your Sacred Mountain."

"In early days the lion was as common as the wolf and bear in our northern wilds. And now, war having given them some respite, they are as plentiful as when Xerxes sought in vain to save his camels from their hungry jaws."

The Persian envoys presently taking their leave, Alexander bade Demetrius hasten to send beaters into the mountain to drive the game down into the valley. Then turning to Roxana, he cried:

"You, sweet love, shall watch the hunt from your dromedary, that you may be spared fatigue or fear of accident."

"Would you put me on a camel after what you have told us of Xerxes' beasts of burden? Fie! I thought you more tender of me, brave Prince," she cried as she hurried away to don garments suitable for the chase.

The Thermaic Gulf (now the Gulf of Salonica), on the western shore of which Alexander's fleet lay anchored, was then the outlet of Macedonia to the Ægean Sea, as it is today. On its eastern shore the narrow peninsula, once the center of Grecian wealth and culture, was now a black and desolate waste, for of its two and thirty cities, Philip, in his strife with Athens, had not left one standing to mark the place. All had been looted and given up to the flames, their inhabitants being put to death or sold

to slavery. On the western shore of the Gulf scarce a habitation marked the plain and forest that lay in the shadow of Olympus. Wars and the scourge of outlaws and marauding bands had long since driven its inhabitants to seek other homes, so that now it was given up to solitude and the haunt of savage beasts. It was amid such waste of plain and forest so dear to the heart of the hunter that the gay cavalcade presently set forth in quest of pleasure and adventure. Reaching the edge of the forest, those who were to take part in the hunt dismounted and armed themselves with such weapons as the nature of the sport required.

"Am I to be set apart to guard the Princess, while others join the kingly sport?" Lysimachus cried in simulated rage, as the hunters were about to take their departure, leaving him behind.

"Let him go, oh Prince," Clitus cried in derision. "The hunt were but a poor thing without him, and I need him not to guard the Princess."

Alarmed that his words should be taken so seriously, Lysimachus cried with shaking voice:

"You could do little without help, good Clitus, were some fierce beast to assail the hapless Princess. I would fain stay behind, then, to aid you, foregoing the noble sport."

"Nay, let Lysimachus go if he will, sweet Prince. I ask no better protection than Clitus' strong arm," Roxana cried, amused, turning to Alexander.

"No, let him remain, lest, as he says, some vengeful beast breaking through endanger your very life," Alexander answered gently, smiling upon his aged tutor.

"I am her slave, oh Prince, and so beat down the wild desire," Lysimachus responded with a grimace, as he settled himself on his horse and drew his cloak about him.

"I would I could share in your sweet contentment," Clitus muttered under his breath, impatient at being left behind.

Soon everything being in readiness, the hunters entered the forest, each taking his way, so that everyone might have some separate chance. As they advanced within the dark shadows of the trees, the cries of the runners-in, far up the mountain side, could be plainly heard as they drove the frightened animals before them. In this manner Alexander slowly made his way to the base of the heights that loomed above him, without adventure of any kind. Then, as he thought to turn his steps, the undergrowth parted and a lion, stricken with fear, stood trembling before him; for, however fierce these noble animals may be when assailed or driven by hunger, they have such fear of man at other times that they will by no means attack him or stand to await his movements. Seeing the Prince the frightened animal turned to fly, but Alexander, lifting his bow, quickly let fly an arrow at the bewildered beast. Hitting the mark, the missile did no harm save to excite the animal's rage. Feeling the smart, the savage beast uttered a frightful roar as it wheeled about and sank to the ground on its outstretched legs. Thus it stayed for some moments, but presently its rage increasing it moved forward with sinuous step, its body hugging the ground, as a cat approaches its prey. When in this way it had come some distance it stopped and, giving voice to a savage roar, gathered itself for

the final charge. Anticipating the movement, Alexander, poising his javelin, hurled it at the quivering beast. The flying missile, true to its aim, pierced the animal's shoulder, but striking no mortal part, the lion sprang forward with dreadful leaps, as if shot from a catapult. At this, Alexander, taking firm hold of his hunting spear, braced himself for the final onslaught of the enraged animal. Coming near, the mighty beast, with a frightful roar of rage and pain, shot high in the air, as if to crush its foe with its descending weight. Calmly awaiting the dread attack, Alexander received the animal on his projecting spear, but only to wound the crazed brute, its swift descent confusing his eye and weakening the final stroke. The lion bearing Alexander back, he grasped his hunting knife, holding the animal at bay with his disengaged arm, about which his cloak was loosely wrapped.

While Alexander was thus engaged, Clitus, coming up unperceived, beheld the approach of the lion and Alexander standing motionless before it. As he stopped to await the issue of the struggle a movement in the undergrowth caught his eye, and, thinking an animal threatened, he drew his bow ready to let fly an arrow, but instead of savage beast the white face and scowling visage of Mithrines' creature showed itself in the half-parted bushes. The intruder, discovering Alexander's fixed attention, advanced with cautious step near to the spot where the Prince stood motionless awaiting the lion's onslaught. At last, assured, the base creature stopped and, taking firm hold of his hunting spear, poised it aloft, prepared to hurl it at his unsuspecting victim; but while the weapon was thus uplifted for the dreadful stroke,

Clitus, drawing his bow to its utmost limit, let fly an arrow full at the exposed body of the murderous wretch. And not in vain, for taking its swift and noiseless flight it buried itself to the feathered shaft in the body of its victim.

"A brave shot, for had it missed the Prince's life had paid the forfeit," Roxana cried in rapture, hastening to his side.

"You here? God of the hills! The Prince will kill me for abandoning my charge, once he knows you have been brought in danger," Clitus cried, stricken with remorse and fear.

"Nay, 'twould have made no difference, for I would have followed had you stayed behind. But see, Clitus, quick! the lion has Iskander down," she cried in fright as she ran forward to where the Prince lay struggling with the ferocious brute.

"Keep back, keep back, lest running in you both be killed," Clitus cried as he drew his hunting knife and hurried after her.

But ere either could reach the Prince's side, Alexander, disengaging his weapon, plunged it to the handle in the noble animal's heart. Dying, the stricken beast relaxed its hold and would have crept away, but with the motion, its life exhausted, it fell dead beside its prostrate enemy.

"Lion against Lion, and the better won!" Clitus cried in admiration as the Prince sprang to his feet.

Hastening to Alexander's side Roxana grasped him in her arms her deep emotion depriving her of speech. Surprised he held her fast, forgetting all save that she was there and unharmed. Thus they stood, clasped in each

other's arms, their hearts too full for utterance. At last disengaging herself she cried:

"'Tis only cowardice, Iskander, that overcomes me."

"Cowardice! brave woman, you know not what it is," he answered, with tender affection, smoothing her disheveled hair.

Taking hold of Alexander's hand and looking down on the noble beast she murmured:

"'Twas a foolish thing, Iskander, to attack the animal alone, in this hidden place. Our Kings, who know no fear, never thus expose themselves when hunting such mighty game."

"There is little danger, sweet love, if the hunter but keep firm hold of his knife and lose not heart," he answered, wiping his blade on the green turf. "But is it as before, Clitus, that in disobeying my commands, you have still obeyed by doing as the Princess ordered?"

"Do not reproach the brave man, sweet Prince, for I was not disposed to stay behind. And fortunate it was, that Clitus followed close upon you, for thus he warded off the dreadful stroke Mithrines threatened from behind," she cried, looking toward the spot where the assassin lay.

"What mean you?" Alexander exclaimed surprised.

"See! there lies the wretch, stricken by Clitus' arrow, while in the very act of striking you as you faced the other way," she answered, pointing to the outstretched figure.

"'Twas the lion he sought to kill not me, sweet Princess. No one could do so cruel a thing."

"No! 'twas for you he meditated the stroke."

"'Tis true, oh Prince, or may I never draw sword again," Clitus interposed.

Still thinking them mistaken Alexander hurried to the side of the assassin. Kneeling down and discovering some signs of life, he lifted the head of the fallen man, bathing the pallid face with water from his drinking horn. Revived, the wounded man opened his eyes, staring blankly, seeming not to know where he was or that he had been hurt; but at last, fixing his eyes on Alexander and recognizing him, he uttered a frightful cry as he sought to push him off. The Prince paying no heed, continued to bathe his face with the refreshing water, striving the while to soothe his agitation with kindly words. Seeing this the other presently lay still, and fixing his fast fading eyes upon Alexander, cried in a choked voice:

"Know you not, oh Prince, that I sought to kill you? Yes, as my brothers have before me. But all in vain, for the Gods have you in their keeping," he went on, pressing his hand to his wounded side.

"What cause of anger have you against me, unhappy man, for surely I have never wronged you?" Alexander asked, scrutinizing the other.

"No. We knew naught of you: 'twas against Philip, the King."

"The King?"

"Yes, and a deadly wrong, past all redress. But water, water, I must not die ere I confess my sin against you." Alexander moistening his parched lips and bathing his face, the wretched man, presently reviving, half raised himself and fixing his sunken eyes on the Prince's

face, cried out: "'Twas at the great siege, the siege of Byzantium, where I and my three brothers fought on the King's side. Thus one day when we were absent on some pressing duty, thinking no harm, the hipparch and his creatures breaking in, bore away our wives. Seeking to regain them and revenge the wrong, we killed the wretch and those who aided him, in open strife. For this the King ordered that we be scourged and afterward put to death. Escaping through the connivance of our comrades we fled to Sardis, swearing an oath to the Gods to do naught in life that did not look to Philip's death. Our story reaching Mithrines' ears, he gave us employment about the castle and, when setting out for Greece, attached us to his person. In this way coming upon you where the Thebans fought, we thought to kill you and thus revenge ourselves upon the King. But now all my brothers being dead, I follow, our oath left unfulfilled. Justly do we die, ye listening Gods, for seeking thus to avenge Philip's crimes," and ceasing, the unhappy man closed his eyes as if in death. Presently opening them, he went on with beseeching voice, clutching Alexander's hand: "You pardon us, sweet Prince, for we were crazed and knew not what we did?"

"I have naught to pardon, wretched man," Alexander answered with broken voice. "Pray to the Gods, for naught else can avail you now."

To this the other made no response, but fixing his glazed eyes on the snow-clad summit of the Sacred Mountain, he died, murmuring a prayer. When he was dead the Prince arose to his feet, his eyes stained with tears,

and putting his arm about Roxana's trembling form, led her in silence from the gloomy forest.

Note. John Williams, the historian, in his account of the Conquest of Persia, describes Alexander's encounter single-handed and on foot, while on a hunting excursion, with "an enormous lion which, roused from its lair faced the young King." Alexander, bidding his companions retire, "receiving the animal's spring on the point of his hunting spear with so much judgment and coolness that the weapon entering a vital part proved instantly fatal." The danger of the encounter was so great, however, that at a solemn assembly of the nobles and officers of the Macedonian army, it was decreed that thenceforth the King should not combat wild beasts on foot nor hunt without being personally attended by a certain number of great officers. The same historian goes on to say that this was not the first time in which Alexander's life had been endangered by wild beasts, and refers to a hunting piece in bronze where the King is fighting with a lion while Craterus is seen hastening to his assistance.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PRINCESS PARCLEDES.

On his return to the camp, Alexander, grieved and saddened by what had occurred, gave orders for the immediate departure of the fleet. Thus in the early night the anchors were weighed and the ships responding to sail and oar quickly glided into the open waters of the gulf. Turning their prows to the north, those who looked could see, far to the east, Athos' lonely height as it glimmered, a mere speck on the moon-lit waters. Nearer by, the plains of Chalcidice wasted by Philip's conquering armies, showed like a black line across the blue of the eastern sky. Here, where a little while before, populous cities and smiling hamlets met the eye, only the cries of savage animals now disturbed the silence of the night. Not that Philip was more cruel than men of his time, but that his aims and ambitions were greater, and the means he used commensurate with the abuses to be remedied. While others, wrangling over the rights of petty states, kept Greece disturbed, Philip, wise and masterful, brought all under subjection to a common purpose. While Grecian leaders declaimed or dreamed of peace and strength without unity, he alone knew that it was but a phantasy of the mind. Offering security to all, he laid his mighty hand on those who sought to perpetuate the political evils of the past. Such was Philip, the King of men. But Alexander, his son and heir, forgetful of

his part, no longer dreamed of men or governments. His thoughts were of his love, the sweet Roxana, who was thenceforth to form the silver lining to the black cloud of war that in a few short months would claim him for the remainder of his eventful life. Beyond the Asiatic border he saw only her image; and, seeing it thus in the golden light of love, its conquest so long dreamed of, was forgotten in the happiness of the present moment. Of this the Persian King knew naught and intent upon the destruction of those who threatened him, all that the golden hoards of Persia could accomplish he freely gave in the accomplishment of his set purpose. Mithrines, his pliant tool, baffled in the attempts already made to destroy the Prince, now impatiently awaited his arrival at Pella for a more favorable opportunity; for there, amid the strivings and bitter hatreds of Philip's court, he doubted not he would be able to accomplish both the King's and Alexander's death. Roxana's jealous love, early divining his murderous purpose, sought in vain to warn the Prince, but he, disdaining his enemy, only smiled upon her fears or stilled them with a kiss.

Such was the threatening aspect in Macedonia's kingly life, when Alexander's noble ship turned its sharp prow into the placid waters of the Lydias. Far in advance of the attendant vessels, she plowed her swift way toward the capital, paying no heed whatever to those that followed. Thus it was in the early morning as Alexander and Roxana standing in the prow of the Delphos, all unconscious of those about them, watched the unfolding landscape with eager interest.

"There! sweet Princess," Alexander at last exclaimed,

pointing to the north, "in the center of this wide expanse lies Pella; and our journey's end," he concluded with sorrowing voice, as if wishing the capital were at the further extremity of the kingdom.

"'Tis a peaceful plain wherein nothing disturbs the sweet repose," she answered softly, surveying the smiling landscape whereon no house or man appeared.

"No, for here it is as nature left it save where some rude shepherd guards his flocks or the hunter stalks his game. But some day, and not far distant," Alexander responded, as if in excuse of the King for locating his capital in the wide expanse, "farms and noble habitations will dot the verdant plain now given up to solitude."

"I like it better as it is, for man only disfigures Nature's handiwork by his presence."

"If that be true of men 'tis not so of women, sweet Princess, as will presently appear—if indeed, she hides not her sweet face behind the door," Clitus here interposed with the freedom of a soldier; for that brave and ingenuous man, liking not the separation from the Prince, had early asked to be transferred to Alexander's ship; and this being granted, he now stood near the Prince and Roxana as the Delphos swiftly traversed the windings of the picturesque stream.

Making no reply, Alexander and his companion stood still, well knowing that Clitus in his own good time would explain the meaning of his words. Nor was it long delayed, for approaching an obscure place in the river, he cried in rapture:

"There it is! The very spot, with its ambuscade and close cover of trees and willows!"

"What is it, good Clitus, for I can see nothing?" Roxana asked, scanning the river in their front.

"The abode of Eurydice, the fairy of the plain, sweet Princess," Clitus answered, mounting to the top of the covered way.

"I see no house nor sign of one," Roxana answered doubtingly. "Or does she live in some enchanted cave or hidden grotto?" she queried with smiling countenance.

"Come hither if you will, sweet Princess, for the hut is hidden by the undergrowth from where you stand. See!" he went on, pointing to an opening in the trees as the Prince and Roxana joined him on the elevated platform, "a house, strong as a fortress and rough as the face of a weather-beaten cliff. There, within that roomy and ill-built hut the fairy lives."

"Alone? Or has she some gentle companion to keep her company?" Roxana asked, pleased at Clitus' speech.

"With her mother, who, robed in black, with pale and melancholy visage, might be the guardian of the spirit world," Clitus replied, as if reciting from some Grecian tragedy.

"I know the hut," Alexander interposed, scanning it attentively, "and have often found shelter for the night beneath its roof when hunting in the wide expanse. 'Twas once the lodge of Alexander, built by him when Mardonius, the Persian general, held Northern Greece in bondage. Here the brave King lived in retirement that he might be near the Grecian border and yet not have it known that he was there."

"Do the Macedonian Kings still make some use of the lonely habitation?" Roxana asked with curious interest.

"No! 'twas given up to the bats and owls a hundred years or more ago."

"And the fairies, Iskander," Roxana exclaimed, turning to Clitus.

"Built by the great King," Clitus interposed with sentimental voice, "when his throne rocked in the balance like a reed in the wind, it now offers asylum to his stricken descendants. For such is its present use, oh Prince," Clitus went on soberly, as if not caring to prolong the mystery.

"You jest, Clitus, for the hut was long since abandoned as I say."

"To be occupied anew, please you, sweet Prince. For 'twas there we carried Orestes when so foully set upon. Bearing him to the door we were admitted by Eurydice, the fairy Princess, when who should presently appear, but her mother, the widow of Menetaus, the King's half brother. He who fell at the sacking of Olynthus," Clitus concluded, not caring to be more explicit as to the manner of the Prince's death.

"The Princess Parcledes!" Alexander exclaimed in astonishment. "I knew not that she survived her husband."

"I remember the Prince as if it were but yesterday, though twenty years and more have passed since he fled the country," Lysimachus here interposed with melancholy voice.

"What manner of man was he?" Alexander asked, greatly interested in the history of the unhappy Prince.

"A shapely, sad-eyed man, with flaxen hair and kingly mien," Lysimachus answered. "Amyntas, his father,

fearing for his life, sent him as a youth to Athens to be educated. But when the King died and the throne became vacant, the Attic chatterers, for purposes of their own, encouraged him to lay claim to the crown. Thus it happened that he was finally brought into conflict with Philip to his utter undoing."

"'Tis his widow, the Princess Parcledes who now occupies the hut and who received and nursed Orestes," Clitus added with emphatic voice.

"But 'twas reported that she was lost at Olynthus and Eurydice, her child, as well," Alexander answered, surprised at what he heard.

"So it has been supposed, oh Prince. But Menetaus, wise and prudent, fearing a disastrous end to the siege, early sent the Princess and his daughter with all his treasures to Athens. There they remained after his death until at last Parcledes petitioning King Philip for permission to return to her own country, he gave her this abandoned lodge of the old King for a habitation, promising her protection so long as she did not meddle with affairs of state."

"If what you say be true 'twould be a discourteous act to pass her door without some kindly greeting," Alexander exclaimed, and signaling the ship to stop he called to the captain to man the barge.

"Come, Roxana, you shall accompany me. 'Tis a happy chance that throws these distressed women across your gentle path," and bidding Clitus attend them they descended and took their places in the waiting barge.

"The shore which swarmed with slaves when I was here before, now seems strangely still," Clitus exclaimed,

peering forward, as the barge shot through the willows that hid the landing from the river.

"Well it may, Clitus, for the place is beset by a marauding band," Alexander cried pointing to the open space back of the hut, where armed men surrounded the Princess and her daughter.

"Beard of Cyclops! 'tis the Dardanian mercenaries, as you may see by their short swords, who deserted the King's standard at Cheronea."

Returning no answer, Alexander grasped the bugle that hung by his side, and placing it to his lips blew the call of the Companion Cavalry. Not waiting response, or for the barge to come fully to shore, he leaped into the shallow stream followed by Clitus. Drawing their swords with the cry "For the King," they rushed upon the marauding band; but the latter recognizing the Companion call, abandoned their prey and mounting their horses in hot haste fled over the hill in wild confusion. Roxana following on and presently rejoining Alexander, they hastened to the side of Parcledes and her daughter, and putting their arms about the distressed women, comforted them with soothing words and promises of protection. Parcledes at last recognizing Alexander by some word of Clitus, dropped on her knees and pulling her daughter down beside her, covered his hands with tears and kisses.

"Weep not, nor kneel to me, sweet cousin," Alexander exclaimed with gentle voice, as he lifted them to their feet and clasped them in his arms. "Our kingly house has not so many princesses that those bereft and unhappy should lack the love and protection of their kindred," and

partly leading and partly supporting Parcledes, they gained the cover of the house. Roxana, following slowly with Eurydice, so won upon the frightened child by her gentle ways and tender sympathy, that ere they had traversed half the distance the young girl's confidence and love was all her own. Entering the spacious room, Alexander turning to Parcledes exclaimed with gentle voice:

"How comes it, sweet cousin, that you live thus isolated and unguarded? Surely it is not the King's doing?"

"No. 'Tis my own act, for I chose this royal house in preference, and doing so Philip assented to my proposal. Nor would another abode have saved me from the chance attack, for 'twas not the act of robbers as you think, but comes from those who seek the life of the gentle youth, Orestes."

"Orestes! Who could wish to do him further harm," Alexander exclaimed, surprised at her speech.

"I know not, except that spies haunting the thickets about the hut, have sought information from my slaves regarding the poor youth for a week or more; and today the marauding band breaking down my doors, demanded that he be delivered up to them. Happily, seeing their approach and fearing their errand, we had hid the youth in Alexander's secret chamber."

"What followed when they found him gone, sweet cousin, if the telling does not distress you?"

"Filled with rage, the leader of the band espying Eurydice, seized upon her and bore her away. I, following, begged on my knees not to be separated from my child; and thus you found us," the unhappy woman answered, clasping her daughter in her arms.

While they were occupied in this manner Clitus approached and being welcomed by Parcledes, he lost no time in making inquiries concerning Orestes for whom he had been vainly searching.

"Thinking him in danger we concealed him, good Clitus, in Alexander's strong room where he now lies attended by the faithful leech."

"I would I might see and comfort the brave youth," Clitus answered, distressed at what she said.

"I will show you the way and gladly if I may," Eurydice interposed, hurrying forward, a blush mantling her fair cheeks.

"The very guide I would have chosen, sweet Princess," Clitus exclaimed gallantly, saluting the gentle maid.

Hastening into an adjoining room and opening a hidden door she led him to an upper room. Here by the dim light he discovered Orestes lying pale and haggard on a cot. Seeing him the brave youth uttered a feeble cry, as he sought to grasp Clitus' outstretched hands.

"Eye of Cyclops! sweet child, take it not so much to heart," Clitus cried with moist eyes. "'Tis the fate of soldiers and in a little while you will be about your business as before. Is it not so?" he went on, turning to Jaron, who, bending over Orestes' wasted body, sought to stay the blood which slowly trickled from the reopened wound.

"Let us hope so, good friend," Jaron answered absently, as he busied himself over the wounded man, "but the strife below and the cries of women came near to costing the youth his life," and beckoning Eurydice to Orestes' side he bade her soothe him into sleep, or some

forgetfulness, "for otherwise I see no hope of staying the flow of blood."

Doing as she was told, the gentle maid threw herself on her knees, and placing her face beside Orestes', smoothed his hair comforting him the while with words of encouragement and tender sympathy, so that presently responding to the soft caress, he fell off into a gentle slumber. Seeing this, Jaron rested and turning to Clitus, asked:

"How happened it, brave man, that you brought relief and in the very nick of time?"

"'Twas not I, Jaron, but the Prince, who stopped to pay Parcledes a visit as he passed, and the outlaws hearing the Companion call, scattered like a flock of crows."

"'Twas a happy visit, Clitus, for I could not have escaped from this vaulted chamber unaided more than from the depths of Hades," Jaron answered, scanning the massive walls.

"The Prince's coming is ever a happy chance. But of this poor youth, good friend; when may we look to see him resume his duties about the palace?"

"Never!" Orestes cried, awaking, "so long as Amyntas lives and has the King's favor."

"Lie still, poor boy. 'Tis not a thing to think of now," Jaron mildly interposed, motioning Eurydice to calm the stricken youth. "Of the wound," he went on, "'twill be months, perhaps a year in healing."

"Then it was more serious than you thought?"

"The hurt? No. But the javelin was poisoned and so the whole body became infected."

"Poisoned!" Clitus cried incredulously.

"Yes, as I say. But go," the leech exclaimed, motioning Clitus back, "the wound has ceased to bleed. Leave us that the youth may have some rest ere I move him to the room below."

Pressing Jaron's hand Clitus took his departure, sorely distressed in mind by what he had seen and heard. Descending to the room below he found Alexander and Roxana gone, but not before the Prince had placed a secure guard about the hut to save the Princess from further harm. Commending Orestes to Parcledes' further kindness Clitus hurried on, threatening the soldiers with his displeasure as he passed, if they in any way relaxed their watchful guard. Nearing the shore great was his astonishment to come upon the noble Ossa bathed in tears and clasping a sobbing woman tenderly to his heart. Unmanned, Clitus stopped, staring in wonder, for beneath their tears there beamed such love and happiness that he could liken it to nothing he had even seen before. Observing him Ossa sought in vain for words, so deeply was he stirred. At last, after many efforts to control his voice, he exclaimed, with broken speech:

"This slave, good Clitus, is my wife, torn from me when my people were overcome and scattered by Philip's army," and bending over he pressed her face to his as if he would hold it thus forever.

Overcome, his eyes wet with tears, Clitus, bewildered, put his arms about the happy pair in loving embrace. Then motioning Ossa to remain he hastened speechless to the waiting ship, murmuring a grateful prayer to the Gods for what he had seen and heard.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALEXANDER'S RETURN TO PELLA.

Advancing from the cover of the trees that hid the river about Parcledes' hut, the plain of Pella burst suddenly upon the view of those who watched from the decks of the stately ships. Seeing the white city outspread on the sloping hill, Roxana cried:

"Is it the capital, Iskander, or some desert mirage that dazzles our eyes and fools our senses?"

"'Tis the city, sweet love; and to the left the palace of the King," he answered, his face lighting as he contemplated the city where he was born and reared.

"It is like a picture, with its background of circling mountains and verdant plains," she cried enraptured.

"Yes, and on the rim of yonder height," he exclaimed, indicating the spot, "lies Edessa, the other and older capital and the burial place of the kings."

"Why did you move from thence into the hot and dusty plain?" she asked, looking away to the cool and restful mountain.

"To wean the people from the rude and half savage life of shepherds," he answered with upraised head. "Hidden in the mountain valleys in unfriendly isolation, the King wished them to look abroad, to gaze upon the open sea, which before they might not reach without traversing the soil of an unfriendly power; and seeing

it, sweet Princess, they sought possession and so have overrun all Greece."

"Did the King achieve all this unaided?"

"Yes, and despite the will of those he sought to benefit. The rude, unkempt herdsmen, watching their flocks in lonely glens or on the sides of rugged mountains, he brought down into the verdant plain and gave them implements of trade and husbandry. Without shelter, save caves or huts of mud and stone, they now have dwellings. Clad in untanned skins he gave them cloaks and woolen garments. Beset by barbarous enemies, he taught them the use of sword and spear. Without order in battle, he schooled them in the art of war and when they had learned the lesson well, led them at last to victory," Alexander answered, exalted at the great achievement.

"Did Iskander have no part in this, sweet Prince?" Roxana asked with a loving smile. "Every good you ascribe to the exalted King, and rightly, too. But Clitus, whose frankness knows no cover, is not at such pains to give Philip credit for things the son has done."

"The King inspires all and so the credit is rightly his. But look! They throw open the gates of the city, and the people crowd forth to enjoy a holiday and give us greeting."

"And see! the river is filled with barges gaily decorated, hastening to welcome you," Roxana exclaimed, her face aflame that the Prince should be thus honored.

Soon the clang of armor and the strains of martial music reaching their ears, they beheld the soldiers hurrying to the river bank to meet and welcome their beloved

Prince. Alexander bringing his ship to land, the noisy throng, crying his name, hastened on board to greet and crown him with the garland of victory; the citizens coming after and crowding close upon the eager soldiers, now joined their loud huzzahs in joyful welcome of the Prince's safe return. Standing in the middle deck, Alexander smiled and bowed his grateful thanks, his heart stirred with love and pride. While thus they watched and cheered, Alexander, taking the garland from off his head, wound about it the crimson scarf that decked the throat of Roxana, who stood beside him. Observing what he did and seeing the sweet face of the smiling Princess, the multitude raised a shout of admiration that, reaching across the level plain, re-echoed from the walls of Philip's lofty citadel.

When the wild excitement had in some measure subsided, Alexander, saluting and thanking the multitude, gave the signal for the fleet to proceed. At this the vast throng, turning about and following on the river bank, raised their voices with one accord, chanting the national hymn. Hearing the glad song, Roxana, unable to restrain the tears of joy that filled her eyes, turned to Alexander, exclaiming:

"'Tis as if every one saw in you a son or cherished brother, Iskander."

"Such I am to them, sweet Princess. For here I have lived all my life, and in such intimacy that they look upon all I do as if they, themselves, had planned it."

"Surely no Prince was ever more loved than you," she exclaimed, as the multitude seeing Alexander replace his plumed helmet, cried in wild delight:

"Cheronea! The Prince! The King! The King!"

"Hear you that, Iskander," Roxana exclaimed, grasping Alexander's hand, her face paling, as if to call him King were an offense that would cost her companion his life, as indeed it would have done in Persia.

"'Tis nothing, for they have often thus saluted me when the King was by. And he, no way offended, joined as heartily as the others in the compliment," Alexander answered, as if it were not a thing to notice.

"If that be so, he must indeed be great," she answered, not comprehending how such confidence could exist between a ruler and his waiting heir.

"He is, sweet Princess. So great, indeed, that he esteems himself a God. But 'tis not that, for till now we have been more like loving brothers than aught else."

"Why do you say 'till now'?" she queried with anxious face.

"I know not why, sweet love, except as whisperings have reached me of some possible change in the King's mind, brought about by the intrigues of the court," Alexander answered, as if it were not a thing likely to be true, or of great consequence.

While they were thus speaking the barge of the Prince Amyntas drew near and he, mounting Alexander's ship, hastening to his side, cried out:

"Hail victorious Prince! Acclaim, and loving welcome back to Pella!"

"Thanks, sweet cousin, I accept the greeting as from a brother's heart," Alexander answered, embracing him. "So, too, will the Princess Roxana, who comes as the Nation's guest in the train of the Persian embassy," Alexander answered, bending before her in low obeisance.

"Welcome to Pella, sweet Princess, and doubly so coming by the side of our victorious Prince," Amyntas answered, doffing his plumed hat as he bent low before her.

"The good fortune of visiting Macedonia has been reserved to me of all my countrywomen, and so, because of it, I esteem the honor all the greater," she answered, blushing under Amyntas' close scrutiny.

"There has been little intercourse of any kind between our country and the Persian Empire, fair Princess, but the King and his royal son promise to change all this in the near future," he answered pleasantly, as if his words conveyed no sinister meaning.

"We Persians have looked on from afar at the great deeds of your exalted King, and come now to crave his friendship as one would an honor and a privilege," Roxana replied, as if noticing nothing amiss in what the other said.

"In that spirit the embassy, animated by love and friendship, will ere long crave your kind offices, Amyntas, as they will that of all lovers of peace," Alexander interposed with generous frankness.

"Do they expect aid from you in such a thing, oh Prince?" Amyntas answered, eyeing Alexander.

"The embassy is inspired by motives so weighty and exalted that everyone must give heed to what they say, good cousin."

"Are the fixed purposes of a great and war-like nation, oh Prince, to be weighed anew and turned aside, it may be, by soft words and futile promises? I cannot believe it possible," Amyntas exclaimed in a harsh voice.

"They come to further an alliance of mutual advantage, good cousin, and not as suppliants. Through them Persia, so long isolated, now seeks the friendship of Macedonia, its equal in station," Alexander answered, the color deepening in his face.

"What enchantment, what sorcery, oh Prince, leads you to speak thus of their endeavor? Surely you must have some revelation from the King or the Gods that your fiery temper is so soon changed to complaisant ease," Amyntas cried in scorn.

To this Alexander made no reply, save to dismiss the other with a wave of his hand. Backing away, Amyntas crimsoned at the rebuff, for, owing to the King's favor he exercised almost regal power and was treated with servile deference by all who frequented the court.

"Is that Perdiccas' son, who, except for Philip would now be King?" Roxana asked with anxious face.

"Yes, the most valiant of Princes, the puissant Amyntas, Perdiccas' son and heir! Did you like him, sweet Princess?" Alexander asked smiling.

"No, Iskander, for he is your deadly enemy," she exclaimed, her eyes expressing her dislike more plainly than her words.

"He has every reason to think kindly of me, Roxana, for I have often befriended him when the labor was a burden," Alexander answered, recalling Amyntas' discontent and moody ways, and the King's former dislike.

"He is no friend of yours, Iskander, for his eyes betray his hatred. Nor can he be much blamed; but you, secure in the people's love no longer think of him as claimant to the throne, forgeting thus his mortal griev-

ance. And so you rest at east while he schemes for your destruction," she went on, as if the politics of Macedonia were already a thing at her finger's end.

"No, I cannot believe he meditates me harm, for at Cheronea, when a Theban threatened my life, Amyntas coming up as I stooped, hurling his lance, killed my assailant where he stood," Alexander answered, as if nothing more could be said.

"Oh frank and loyal Prince, 'twas against you the lance was aimed," Roxana cried, her love and suspicion of Amyntas divining the truth. Hearing her Alexander started, disturbed in spite of himself at what she said, when he reflected on the circumstances of the battle. "My love is not deceived, Iskander. He is no more your friend than the renegade Mithrines who, now that your rank is known, professes to honor and admire your princely character. But 'tis only pretense, sweet love; he hates you and will harm you if he can," Roxana went on, as if she would force her love to see his enemies with her eyes. But Alexander, like Philip, brave to rashness, thought no harm could reach him and so, smiling, dismissed the subject.

In this way the fleet at last approached the citadel, where the chamberlain of the King came forward and saluted Alexander with humble deference. Presenting him to the Princess and the members of the embassy, the exalted official conducted them, with stately ceremony, to the quarters set apart for their residence within the lofty fortress. Alexander, at last free, lost no time in hastening to greet the Queen, who had long impatiently awaited his coming. No sooner did she catch sight of

his waving plumes and glistening armor than, motioning those about her to withdraw, she advanced with open arms to receive and welcome him. Speechless and trembling she clasped him to her breast, tears filling her eyes and sobs choking her utterance; for, in the troubled life of this great and most unhappy Queen, Alexander only, through the great love she bore him, held her haughty nature and half savage heart in sweet subjection. For Philip, whom she once loved as the tigress does its mate, she now felt only impassioned scorn and deadly hatred. Thus animated, like one apart, she welcomed the return of her son as the shipwrecked sailor, tossed by angry waves, welcomes the one who comes to cheer and succor him. Regaining her composure in some degree, she put her arms about the Prince, kissing his face and hair again and again with tender eagerness. Then, clasping his face in both her hands, she looked long and steadfastly into his smiling eyes, as if she would make sure she still held his love. At last, convinced, she took his hands in hers and kissing them with hungry eagerness, exclaimed:

"Welcome, dear son, to Pella and your mother's heart! For the starving shepherd, wandering aimlessly amid our mountain mists, looks not forward to food and rest as my heart hungers and thirsts for your presence and love."

"Knowing this, exalted Queen, I have been remiss in lingering by the way, little regarding your loneliness or the love that watched for my return," he answered, placing his arm about her and caressing her with tender affection. For, unaccountable as it appeared to the frequent-

ers of the court, this proud and sensitive Prince loved his mother as if she possessed every virtue known to womankind.

"You only understand me, Alexander; you only see my heart and know its fierce longing for love and trusting confidence," she answered, her eyes gleaming with savage hatred at the thought of the neglect in which she lived.

"All men shall know your greatness, oh Queen, for the people love me and in this love you shall doubly share," he answered, pushing back the mass of yellow hair from about her troubled face.

"This sweet dream can never be, Alexander, though you beg the boon on bended knee. Philip no longer loves me and the multitude seeing his coldness ascribe the cause to fault of mine. His aversion is open and the sycophants that throng the court seeing this, treat me with rude neglect or cold discourtesy. But why do I burden you with the woes of an abandoned woman, who no longer has a place in the world, nor wishes one save for the honor of her beloved son. There! sweet, do not answer, for I know well what you would say. Go rest and refresh yourself, but be not too long gone, for no comforting thought stirs my tired heart when you are absent," and putting her arms about him in fond affection, she dismissed him with tears and tender caresses.

CHAPTER XIX.

PHILIP, KING OF MACEDON.

Philip, to make sure his domination of Greece and in avoidance of the Persian embassy, long delayed his return to Pella. Meanwhile Oxyartes and his associates fretted away their time in idle discourse, unable to make any headway whatever in the great object of their visit. At last, news having come that Philip might shortly return, every one was stirred to life in expectation of the event; for this great and restless monarch, amid his drunken revels and sensual debaucheries, was yet so filled with mighty projects and kingly ambitions that no one could forecast what was to come, except as it stood revealed. Thus, one morning—and sooner than had been thought—the King, with an escort of horse and riding at full gallop, drew rein at the entrance to the fortress. His coming being unknown save by the guard and the slaves loitering about the entrance, he hurried unobserved to his apartments to bathe and refresh himself.

Philip at this time was forty-one years of age and in the twenty-first year of his reign. Second in the line of succession, he had been in his youth in extreme peril of his life from the ambition of the Regent, Ptolemy. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Thebes, then the dominant power of Greece, as a hostage, where he remained three years, observing men and studying the science of government. In familiar intercourse, during these years

with the Theban generals, Epaminondas and Pelopidas, the greatest military leaders of the age, he learned from them the art of war. Afterwards, when he became King, he extended and improved upon their methods in the organization of the Macedonian Army, making it the most effective then known to men.

Of the pre-eminence that Philip attained and the aggrandizement of his country that followed, there are few if any parallels in history. A usurper upon the throne, without wealth or followers, he had no source of strength in the early years of his reign save in his ability to inspire men with confidence in his leadership and belief in the great destiny that awaited him as King. So impoverished was his country at this period that the only thing of value the King possessed, with which to bribe an enemy or tempt a friend, was a silver goblet. This, like a hungry miser, he concealed at night beneath his pillow. It is said of him by his enemies—the historians—that so transcendent were his talents and so great his power over others that, when face to face with men, he had such semblance of honesty, so ingenuous an appearance of candor, so open and transparent a countenance, that all save the more astute trusted his word without question. Yet it is claimed, and doubtless truthfully, that he was never sincere in anything he said or did throughout all his life, when his interests were better served by concealment or misrepresentation. In this way and through his great ability to influence or beguile men, he cemented his power, while he allayed the fears of his enemies or led them hopelessly astray. Thus, without other resources than his courage and wisdom and subtle craft, he organ-

ized and extended his kingdom until it finally dominated all Greece, as it already held in subjection the savage tribes that bordered upon Macedonia. No great monarch known to history, with aims so transcendent and far-reaching, ever lived a life of greater simplicity. In intimate companionship with his officers and those about the throne, all, nevertheless, yielded him blind obedience, respecting his pre-eminence, his dauntless courage and transcendent genius for affairs.

Philip is said to have been exceedingly vain of his person, as all great men are apt to be, and with the enrichment of his country he, more and more, allowed himself the indulgences of kingly wealth and power. Royal pages, the sons of princes and nobles, kept watch about his bed, waited upon him at table, held his stirrup when he mounted his horse, and performed all the offices of personal attention usual in the case of a great and absolute monarch. To further emphasize his kingly dignity, he adorned his person with princely garments and jewels, bedecking his arms and ankles and throat with wide bands of gold, encrusted with costly gems.

In the affairs of government, Philip ever sought to attain his ends by politic means. But suppression, misrepresentation, bribery, cunning, guile, all were alike to him if thereby he could accomplish his purpose. He had recourse to arms only when other means failed, for, strange as it may appear to those familiar with his life, he was neither blood-thirsty nor fond of strife. War was a means to an end when peaceful measures failed. Secretive, subtle, politic in his intercourse with men, knowing no forbearance for those who were weak,

sagacious, merciless in claiming what he craved, great in comprehension and bold and skillful in execution, Philip lost no opportunity, however slight, to build up his power. Yet, where his interests were not concerned, no private citizen was more amiable or peaceably inclined than he. He was not vindictive or cruel, and if he was violent, it was not because he loved violence for itself. If he destroyed cities, ravaged populous districts with sword and fire, put his enemies to death or sold them into slavery, he did it in the accomplishment of a great and predetermined purpose. That purpose was the ascendancy of the kingly power of Macedonia. He aimed to secure, at last, unity and peace among the warring and irreconcilable factions that had disturbed Greece for a thousand years. He shed blood no farther than need be in the accomplishment of this purpose, and had he lived, the unity of Greece would have well repaid the sacrifice; but dying before his time, it seemed a cruel waste.

Gross in his appetite, it was his nature to enjoy the table and the association of boon companions. At such times, giving himself up to the unstinted use of wine, his drunken debaucheries exceeded those of all other men, as his mind excelled all others, save Alexander's, in its alertness and strength. These excesses, however they may appear, were in the nature of relaxation to Philip, from the bloody strain of battle and the harassments of mind attendant upon the fulfillment of his mighty aims. Neither his love of wine, nor his liaisons, which were shameless and without number, ever led him to forget the objects of his kingly life or the aggrandizement of his country. In this all men are agreed.

It is said of Philip that when his anger was fully aroused every one stood appalled at its strength and ferocity. Then the thousand nameless acts of infidelity and shameless treachery that characterized his life, stamped their hideous impress on his furrowed brow, so that all might read the baleful story. At such times, his face, inflamed from wine, and wounds received in battle, became a dark purple, the scars with which it was seamed, giving him a savage appearance terrible to behold. In battle his crisp, curly hair was bathed with moisture and hung limp and disheveled about his massive head. At such times his beetling brows, contracting, overshadowed his gleaming eyes, giving his leonine face the appearance of a wild and ferocious animal. His savage passions when thus aroused in battle, gaining complete mastery, his brain succumbed to the wild frenzy and turmoil of the hour, so that he was like one demented. In this how different from Alexander, whose mind seemed to clear in the strife of battle, as if—and as has been thought—that were his natural element. Such was Philip of Macedonia, the greatest man the world had known up to his time, just as Alexander was greater than all who had preceded him.

Having overcome all his enemies, Philip now returned to Pella, with the cherished ambition of his stormy life fully gratified. Pleased with the world and himself, all that was amiable in the man showed itself in the hospitable countenance of the King. In this mood, and having bathed and refreshed himself, he summoned his austere and trusted civil governor, Antipater, to his presence; the latter responding with the alacrity of the trained cour-

tier, the King lost not a moment in questioning him about the things that were uppermost in his mind.

"Come, good Antipater," he cried as the royal pages busied themselves with his toilet, "you who hate wine and possess every virtue denied your King, what present scandal stirs the gossips of the court? Who among the gallants has been drunk oftenest? Who has strayed farthest from the path of virtue? Who has added to the number of his mistresses? Whose ox has been gored? I come unheralded, as you see, and purposely, that I may the sooner acquaint myself with the doings of the court. How do our Persian friends pass the hours? Not discontentedly, I hope?" the King concluded, as if after all that were the thing that interested him most.

"With such cheerful countenances, oh King, as the damned may wear who haunt the precincts of the lower world," Antipater answered grimly.

"How like they the accommodations and the fare of Pella?" the King went on, waving the pages away.

"Poorly, oh King, I must believe, if their appetites are an index of their stomachs."

"It will be better with longer stay. Their delicate palates are not accustomed to our strong food. Meanwhile we will treat them with such pretense of favor as we can. But we must enlarge our quarters, good Antipater," the King exclaimed, looking about him. "Other delegations seek our growing power from every quarter, and the store-houses of the world are being ransacked to find acceptable presents for the Imperator and Master of Greece. But of these Persian Grandees," the King went on, "is Alexander much in their company?"

"Not more than courtesy requires, oh King, if I except the Bactrian Princess, Oxyartes' daughter."

"What of that?" the King asked, curiously.

"Much, oh King, for he is but the semblance of his former self when not in her presence. Losing all energy, he wanders listlessly about the fortress till chance or contrivance throws him in her way."

"Has it gone so far, my gossip? He, who unlike his father, would never notice women. His warmth stirs my heart, good Antipater; I would he were more given to such amorous adventures. But about another matter, good Antipater," the King went on, hesitating, "have Attalus and his niece Cleopatra returned to Pella?"

"Yes, oh King, and now occupy their palace in the city, with full retinue of followers and slaves."

"Is she expectant of the new honor and in good spirits?" the King asked, stopping to hear the other's answer.

"Yes, oh King, and withal, of such surprising beauty that the people crane their necks and stop to gaze upon her in admiration as she passes."

"Well they may, good Antipater, but is the proposed marriage much discussed, think you, or is my purpose only surmised?"

"It was not at first believed, oh King. Now little else is talked, but not above a whisper, lest it turn out to be untrue."

"How do they receive it—kindly?" the King asked, eyeing the other.

"Every one commends the grace and surprising beauty of the bride, oh King."

"What says Alexander? Is he complaisant or defiant?" Philip inquired with some anxiety.

"Of all those about the court, the Prince seems not to be informed, oh King. He, like the deceived husband, remains ignorant while the world gossips behind his back. But the Prince, as I have said, has eyes and ears only for the fair Roxana, and so is blind and deaf to all else."

"'Tis strange that so great a thing should have been kept back from him," the King answered, as if doubting its truth.

"The Prince has little curiosity, as you know, oh King, and less courtesy for the common gossips of the court. Besides, who would dare to speak to him about a thing that touches him so closely? It were likely to cost a man his life, so great is his pride and his respect for his mother. If some rumor of the marriage has come to his ears it has been only vaguely, and he has given it no heed. Such stories have been common in Macedonia these late years, oh King, and the wise give them little thought," Antipater answered with a sidelong glance at his master.

"Poor Prince, he will not take it kindly for he loves his mother as in his childhood," the King went on reflectively. "Better he should know nothing till the thing is done and opposition of no avail. But about my wives, I scarce know the number, Antipater; do they take it unkindly?"

"One wife more or less, should not be a cause of worry where there are so many, oh King," Antipater answered, evading the King's question.

"Plurality of wives has its vexations, Antipater," the King went on meditatively, "but the annoyances must be set off against the advantages."

"So the Kings of Macedonia have ever reasoned," Antipater answered soberly, remembering the seas of blood and countless ills his country had suffered from this cause.

"Thus the King may have many children to marry to those not friendly to the throne, and so make adherents where, otherwise, there would be enemies. That is clearly an advantage," the King answered, as if it were a subject of calculation.

"Yes, if the ties prove not irksome and the enmity become the greater," Antipater answered, as if conveying a warning.

"I have no time to weigh such chances, good friend. Nor would it avail me. We must trust those about us, nor can we put off the hour of our undoing though we hedge ourselves about by fire. But if the lesser wives look upon my making Cleopatra Queen with little interest, it must be different with the tigress Olympias," Philip queried, with some concern.

"I know not, oh King; but she having been Queen all these years and being mother to the heir, has more at stake than the others," Antipater answered, as if foreseeing all the evils this ill-considered marriage would bring in its train.

"Is she much about and of cheerful countenance, or does she mope in the house?" the King asked, with sardonic humor.

"She goes not abroad at all, oh King, or only with her Molossian guards and attendants."

"Go to her, good Antipater, and advise her of my return and that I will follow you to pay my devoirs in person," the King exclaimed with a grimace. "Afterwards, convey my greeting to the Persian Ambassadors and say I will receive them informally within the hour. Such haste will indicate a pleasurable eagerness to do the great King honor and so our real intent may be the better concealed," the King went on, returning to his toilet.

"They feel great uncertainty respecting your intentions, oh King, and so have awaited your return with impatience and ill-concealed apprehension."

" 'Tis but natural, and the movement of our troops toward the Hellespont heightens their alarm, but it is only to afford needed protection to our Thracian possessions. Could anything be plainer? But that we may evince our great respect for the Persian monarch, announce that his ambassadors are to be honored with a sumptuous banquet. Give the matter in charge to Amyntas, who craves employment about the palace. A banquet will be much to the taste of the luxurious Persians, who are great eaters, Antipater, and far exceed us in their love of wine, strange as it may appear. Because of this vice, the only manly one they have, I am inclined to hold them in some respect. So let the event be not delayed, for I need some diversion and our strong drink will purge my stomach of the weak stuff the Grecians have filled it with of late. There! Go to the Queen and do as I bade you, and I will follow without loss of time."

Antipater doing as he was directed, had scarce left the room ere the King followed at his heels. Reaching the apartment of the Queen, the loud and angry voice of Olympias caused Philip to hesitate whether to go forward or remain where he was.

"Does the King bring the painted strumpet Cleopatra to the palace in his unannounced return?" the Queen cried, "or does he postpone that pleasant duty till another day?"

"He comes alone, gracious Queen, or only with a small retinue," Antipater answered in a conciliatory voice.

"Like the jackal, he hastens to the spot where the rotting carcass lies exposed. Already gorged with lust, the monster hurries his return, hearing of the presence of his mistress!" she cried in a shrill voice.

"The King, oh Queen, sends me to announce his coming without delay, to greet your august majesty in person," Antipater answered, obsequiously, as if the other had not spoken, or he had not heard.

"Go back, oh supple slave, and say the Queen will never accord him audience until he abandons his purpose to make Cleopatra his adulterous Queen. Go! Your presence is scarcely less odious than the King you serve with such base subserviency," she cried, turning angrily away.

Making humble obeisance, Antipater took his departure, nor seemed to see the King who waited without, with stern and threatening countenance. Thus Philip stood, until the look of hate and half of fear that overspread his swarthy face, gave place to one of more complaisant humor. Then entering unannounced, he cried as if in joy:

"Hail, gentle Queen! You give but a tardy welcome to your King after his long and enforced absence. The court, too, so it would appear, takes little interest in his movements, if one may judge from the scant attention paid his coming," the King concluded, advancing, as if to embrace her. Backing away, her face aflame with passion, she cried:

"The minions who pander to your lust would not have failed to display their truculence had they known of your coming. You are but too well served, oh King, and have little cause to complain of the pliant creatures who throng about your person, hungry to do your base offices."

"Greet me not thus rudely, Olympias," the King answered, with show of amiability. "Would you have me surrounded by other than friendly followers! My life were not worth an obol's purchase in such case."

"That were enough to pay if virtue fixed the price, oh King. I would have you served by men not panderers; by loyal subjects, not the pliant creatures who lie awake to entrap you with seductive wiles. Throw them off, Philip, and lead the kingly life that becomes your genius and exalted rank," she answered, reproachfully.

"I am what I am, oh Queen, and cannot change if I would. Nor is there cause," Philip answered impatiently.

"Dare you excuse your vices! You, whose every hour of relaxation is filled with drunken revels and lustful indulgence," she answered bitterly.

"If my morals are lax, oh Queen, 'tis whispered that you are not blameless in that respect," he answered menacingly.

"If I have transgressed, 'tis you who taught me the

way: 'twas you who beat down the noble restraint that held me back. But 'tis not true that I have wronged you in aught. I was a weak fool, and wholly a savage to have believed, when we were wedded, that a King with four wives could be true to his Queen!" she answered with scorn.

"Abstinence is the merit and office of women. Men know not what it is. You should have remained chaste, Olympias, nor found excuse, despite what you say, in my shortcomings. But you have far outdone me in gross excesses. The bacchanalian orgies in which you take part in the mountain solitudes, are but a cover to your liaisons with Gods and men. I, myself, not six months past, found a serpent half hidden in your garments as you lay asleep; proving, oh Queen, if proof were needed, of your commerce with the Gods. Is it any wonder then that you call your son 'The God-like Alexander,' " Philip cried in rage, for of the communion of mortals with the Gods, he fully believed, as did his superstitious countrymen.

"Seeing near me a tame and harmless serpent, your besotted mind, overwrought with wine and wanton indulgence, conjures up and holds fast this base suspicion. Know, oh King, that I sought in the Orphic ecstasy and Thracian orgies, some sorcerer's way, some magic spell to win you back to me. Nay, you believe not what you say, but belie me only to excuse your acts of infidelity and shame," she answered, burying her face in her hands.

"I speak only the truth. Others wiser than I in such matters know what I aver to be true," the King answered soberly. For he was, in the religious phantasies of the

age, not less credulous than the most ignorant and barbarous of men. "However, be it as it may, henceforth our paths lie apart. I claim not to be different from what I am. The half-tamed savage, however chaste she may be, makes but a sorry mate for the conqueror of Greece and master of the world, be his morals good or bad. At the eleventh hour, and all too late, I am determined to put you away and so end the turmoil of our growing court," he answered with brutal candor.

"Such words, oh King, ill become a Prince born of a line of polygamous bastards. The Molossian monarchs from whom I come, trace their descent from the God-like Achilles and outrank the petty traffickers of Argos in glory, as the sun does the moon," she answered scornfully.

"Yet, though nine hundred years have passed, your people are no whit greater, no whit less savage than their ancestor, nor ever will be," Philip answered wearily.

"If I am outspoken, it is not that I am less civilized than you, but that you hide your savage nature under a varnish of polite speech. Nor too well, poor King, for but now, when angered, it gave way to the jargon of your barbarous ancestors as the pig returns to the mire. So, too, it is of Alexander when angered, albeit he was the pupil of Aristotle. Nay, you are wholly a savage like your people who wear a cord about their bodies if, perchance, they have not yet killed an enemy. So true is this that if one but pinch your neck, the bristles of the wild boar would straightway obtrude themselves," the Queen answered, carried away with anger and scorn.

"Cease, woman! I care not if the blood of all the

barbarians who fought before Troy run in your veins, I am still determined to be free. Your tigerish nature allows me neither happiness nor quiet."

"Can you do this brutish thing after all these years, Philip, and doing it cast suspicion upon your trusting and loyal son, the kingly Alexander?" she answered, striving to restrain herself.

"Nay, he may still look to succeed me on the throne, if he do naught to cross my will. I carry not my purpose to such lengths at this time."

"But later you will put him away should you have a son by this painted wanton. Nay, deny it not. I read it in your wavering eyes, but ere you shall commit so great a crime I will kill you with my own hands if no one else has the spirit to free the world of so great a monster!" she exclaimed with uplifted face, as if swearing it.

"Nor will you wait so long if the stories of your intrigues be true. I have returned to Pella in good time, it seems, if I would not face rebellion in my own household," he cried, backing away as if his life were threatened.

"I know not with what lies the creatures who befoul the court have sought to poison your mind. For of intrigues or conspiracy, or thought of it, there is no word of truth," she answered, as if astonished at what he said.

"Call you it not conspiracy to fill Alexander's mind with thoughts of an alliance with the wily Persian at a time when Macedonia meditates the invasion and conquest of that perfidious country?" the King answered, remembering Antipater's words and making use of them.

"It is a lie, oh King, for Alexander has no thought of such a thing."

"Not content to wean the Prince from my great enterprise, this cunning Princess must needs array him openly against me, the King! Of this, as of the other I am well advised," he cried, striding back and forth as if crazed.

"This unjust suspicion, for it is nothing less, is no wise different from your insane distrust of me. For know, oh King, the Princess is of such gentleness that she could not be brought to cherish unkind thoughts of you, had any one the heart to thus disturb her sweet nature. She thinks you great and kingly, not the gross, licentious thing you are. Nor is there aught more of truth in what you say concerning Alexander's thoughts of her, or, if it be true, it is not unworthy his kingly nature, nor does it meditate harm to you or your ambitious projects," the Queen responded, as the she-bear might defend her young.

"He would scarce breathe his intentions if it were true, but would bide his time, nor ask permission of any one."

"Therein, Philip, he is like his father, for what heed paid you to the clamor of your countrymen when we were wedded. Men born to rule choose their mates, nor ask the friendly offices of others, and if Alexander loves the Princess he will wed her and no other. Take heed," then, oh King, nor oppose him idly, for you have no more loyal subject than he."

"Thus wedded he would have no heart in the Persian war, and without him half my army were as well

at home. For the eagle sweeping down from the mountain crag is not more certain of its trembling prey than Alexander when charging with lance and glistening sword at the head of my invincible cavalry," Philip cried, with impassioned voice. "No! I will have none of it. Rather will I break with him entirely and so build anew. Now, oh Queen, that I have disclosed my set purpose," the King went on, "choose which you will do, take up your residence in the castle at Edessa, where every honor shall be paid you, or seek a home with your brother, the Molossian King?"

"Is it true, then, that your passion for Cleopatra has reached such height that nothing can stay you from this disgraceful step?" the Queen answered, as if some vestige of hope still found a place in her heart.

"Yes. The marriage is as a thing accomplished and naught shall delay its consummation," the King answered sternly, his eyes coldly meeting hers.

"Then may the Gods whom you profess to worship and serve, bring you and her to a speedy and frightful death for transgressing their laws and the customs of enlightened men," she cried, lifting her clenched hands to heaven.

"Lest such a thing should happen, my gentle mate, I have already placed my image beside those of the Gods, that I may enjoy like freedom of action," he answered grimly. "While you curse you do not answer. Choose quickly that this interview may end," the King cried, awaiting her response.

"If your diseased mind had not lost all semblance of dignity and honor you would not ask so foolish a ques-

tion, base King, but would know that I could not breathe the air of Macedonia as a subject where I had once been Queen. There, go!" she went on, her hand toying with the dagger at her girdle, "lest I kill you and so bring a new sorrow to the heart of the kingly Alexander," and not waiting his departure she turned and strode from the room.

While Philip, thus left alone, stood still, pondering on what had occurred, a hurried footstep caused him to start, as if he were already beset by hidden enemies. Turning hastily about the door flew open and Alexander rushing in threw his arms about the King.

"Welcome back to Pella, father and King," he cried, kissing Philip on both his cheeks.

"You are glad, then, that I have come?" Philip answered, doubtingly, surprised at Alexander's affectionate greeting. "I have heard that all your martial ardor and fierce longing for war has given place to soft repose and idle indulgence about the palace and so might not welcome my return as formerly."

"There is no act or word to stir the blood nor feed suggestion when you are absent, oh King, and so nothing is left us but to wait your coming with such patience as we can," Alexander answered, excusing himself.

"You were wont to find an outlet for your energies in the chase when duties of the state did not claim you, oh Prince. Now, our Molossian dogs grow fat in their kennels for want of work, and you so soft of texture as to be scarce able to lift a spear," the King answered, eying his soft cheeks and delicate hands.

"Nay, oh King, you do me wrong, for you being

away, the care of our guests and the courtesy due their high mission has claimed my time and thoughts."

"Is it true, as I am told, that your high ambition to overrun Asia has lost its vigor in the company of these soft spoken courtiers? Such stories are common talk about the court."

"It may be true, oh King, that my ardor has lost a part of its fire in the advantages the ambassadors hold out to us to prolong the peace. Is it strange that it should be thus?"

"I hold it so, for it is known to you that I have prolonged the negotiations until I was ready to declare war. Returning, I may still dally with their overtures until my preparations are more forward. Does that look like continuing the peace? No, there can be no such thing unless by bribery or other treacherous means, Persia compasses my death and yours."

"Nay, I cannot believe such thing possible, oh King, for Oxyartes is all that is honorable among men," Alexander responded with warmth.

"Being such a man, would the great King make him the means of accomplishing his murderous end? He is but a cloak to cover the acts of others. But do not tell me you have cooled in our purpose to the point of siding with these emissaries?" the King cried, knowing Alexander would answer truly.

"I may not deceive you, oh King, by saying that other thoughts have not somewhat overshadowed those I once had regarding the invasion of Persia," Alexander answered with some reluctance.

"What think you of the matter now, if you still make me your confidant? In times past you have never been

backward in expressing your thoughts, and often to your detriment," the King exclaimed impatiently.

"The change, for change there is, oh King, does not grow out of what has been said, so much as what I saw as I traversed unhappy and distracted Greece. It's ruined cities, abandoned fields, and lawless life cry aloud for a ministering hand, and no one less wise than you, oh King, can accomplish a task so difficult," Alexander answered, his face flushing at the remembrance of what he had seen.

"Go on! If the Persian invasion recedes, what other object, save that you mention, rises to take its place; for you have ever been more bent on the conquest of Persia than I?" Philip answered, gazing with the admiration of other days into the glowing face of his immortal son.

"I have thought it now the better course, oh King," Alexander went on, his gaze fixed on the distant mountains, "to stay our hand a while till you have welded into one harmonious nation all the petty and discordant states of Greece. This will not be difficult nor long of accomplishment for one so great and wise; for once the people feel the security of peace and may go unquestioned where they like, all their petty jealousies and vain strivings after immaterial and impossible things will vanish into thin air. Having in this way founded a great and lasting empire, you may pursue your purposes where you like with a united people at your back."

"What would you do once Greece were united as it should have been centuries ago?" the King asked, as if such thoughts had not been absent from his own mind.

"It were presumptuous in me, oh King, to say what I would do in the presence of one who has accomplished

so much with resources so scant," Alexander answered, excusing himself.

"Nay, go on. Your wisdom is not measured by years, nor is it like that of other men," the King answered, his heart full of love for his son.

"Then, oh King, if you command me, Greece being pacified, I would bring under its enlightened rule all Europe, including Rome, which rises like a menacing spectre in the west. Afterwards, with the continent behind us," he went on, his face upraised, "Asia would respond with scarce a struggle to our united arms."

"All that you say is possible and perhaps the better way, but Asia hoards the wealth of the world and should come first; with its accumulated treasures the other may be accomplished at our ease," the King answered as if no phase of the problem had escaped his alert mind.

"Gold will not cure the ills of Greece, oh King. Nor is it much needed to subdue the barbarous hordes of Europe. Besides, will not Persia, if she be wise, use her vast stores to confront us with all the disaffected soldiers of Greece, backed by her own people? Such forces we could by no means easily overcome if properly commanded," Alexander answered, as if to draw the other on.

"Persia has lost its enterprise and war-like spirit, and her kings have become little more than hoarders of accumulated treasures. This wealth she will not use to create new armies, but will place dependence on her servile hordes, scourging them to battle. We, conquering at last, as we must, will find the treasuries of the empire full," Philip cried with glistening eyes, as if he already beheld the gold and silver.

"But while you are away no progress will be made at home, and should mishap befall, Greece will remain torn by warring factions, and in the end Macedonia will be left a thing apart and of no more account in the world's progress than when you ascended the throne, oh King," Alexander answered, as if foreseeing the fate of his country.

"Mishap cannot befall us. If the Ten Thousand could traverse Persia from the Tigris to the western confines without a leader, surely nothing can befall the mighty army of Macedonia.

"I only tell you my thoughts, oh King, for however you may decide, I will follow and with loyal heart; but were I King I would do as I say and, having my way, would, I know, be less wise in its exercise than you," Alexander answered, having no thought of standing out against his father. For in the measureless despotism of Macedonia, all were taught obedience to the Sovereign and, save in the penalty of death, as it might affect the army, all alike yielded as children to his absolute will.

"You are as fit to rule as I, oh Prince, and should I fall Macedonia will lose nothing by the change. What you advise were perhaps the wiser course, but Persia, through her fear, is a menace to our country, as she has ever been to Greece. Its hoarded wealth is needed to fertilize the commerce of the world, and through this war, waged on a hated country, discordant Greece may be welded into a compact and united nation. So it will be, Alexander, but for the present the determination, while suspected, may not be openly avowed," the King concluded, putting his arm about Alexander and leading him from the room.

CHAPTER XX.

CLEOPATRA, ATTALUS' NIECE.

Taking leave of the King in the great court of the palace, Alexander stood still, watching with admiration the resolute stride and robust form of the great monarch, as he hastened with buoyant step to his apartments. Neither dissipation nor the hardships of the camp, nor wounds received in battle, it was apparent, had as yet in any way impaired Philip's vigor of body and mind. While Alexander thus watched the monarch as he disappeared unattended, within the palace, the love-lorn Pausanias approached with wan smile and deferential manner. This young nobleman, whom we left in the opening part of our story, half crazed with grief over the fickle conduct of his love, Cleopatra, had not grown more reconciled with time, to his disappointment. His face, from being full and rubicund, had become thin and sallow. Dark circles surrounded his eyes, and a settled melancholy showed itself in all his movements. No longer taking interest in his duties he gave himself up unreservedly to gambling with Mithrines, of whom, it was said, he had won great sums of money. These he spent for jewelry and in the procurement of rich and costly garments with which to adorn his person. For the grief of this vain and weak man, as is often the case in life, was never so great as to outweigh his thought of self. Winning thus from Mithrines and being much in

his society, the latter had, little by little, come to exercise complete ascendency over the mind of the wretched nobleman. This influence he made use of to incite Pausanias' passions and inflame his hatred of the King. While thus ingratiating himself with the forlorn lover, Mithrines had not neglected to extend his influence in other directions likely to be of use to him. Losing constantly and cursing with simulated wrath the wretched fortune that pursued him, he still played with all who sought such diversion. In this way Amyntas, through his winnings from Mithrines, was now abundantly supplied with gold, which he wasted on his stable and in vain ostentation and luxuriance of life. Between Mithrines and this moody and disloyal Prince, the closest intimacy had grown up, so that they were like two brothers; but with such show of openness and loud expression of admiration and respect on Mithrines' part for the King and Alexander, that many thought him about to forswear his allegiance to Persia to return once more to the Grecian service under Philip. Nor did he, like so many, avoid or slight the Queen, but sought every opportunity to ingratiate himself in her favor by the extreme deference he paid her as a woman and as the Queen of Macedonia.

Among others, disaffected like Amyntas, who sought the company of Mithrines, were three Lyncestian nobles, who in the course of events, as history recounts, were destined to end their lives so unhappily. These young noblemen, like Pausanias and Amyntas, won great sums of Mithrines and, like them, ended by becoming the mere creatures of his will. In this way the wily Persian attached to his person a wide and subservient following

among the dissolute nobles of the country. Curiously, his losses were always to those who had cause of complaint against Philip or Alexander, or were likely to be useful to him in the prosecution of his hidden projects. Amyntas, having now abundant means, lost no opportunity to build up his influence among the dependents of the court, and seeking the society of Pausanias, he kept alive his animosities by fulsome flattery and open reproach of the King. This, until at last, the deluded lover looked upon himself as so grievously misused that he was bound in honor to seek redress for his wrongs, even to the extent of putting to death those who had injured him. Such were the secret intrigues of the court, fostered by Mithrines and Amyntas, on Philip's arrival at Pella.

Much cast down over the King's return and the rumor that he was to consummate his marriage with Cleopatra without delay, Pausanias approached Alexander with halting step and woe-begone visage. The latter, seeing him cried out, half in raillery:

"What new sorrow oppresses you, Pausanias? Yesterday you were aglow with Cleopatra's coming; today you are like a man sick with the jaundice. Does she still look coldly on your suit, oh friend, or have you some new grievance to relate?"

"Do not treat my passion with derision, oh Prince. Wit steeped in sarcasm, though it come from the King, could scarce be patiently borne if one expected something else," Pausanias replied sullenly.

"Nay, I had no thought to wound you, for I wish you success in all your undertakings," Alexander answered soberly.

"Know you not that all my hopes are blasted? A dish dropped from Edessa's cliff could not be more completely broken by the fall," Pausanias exclaimed, with moody brow.

"For shame! You are but a lame lover, Pausanias, to despair so quickly. Women prize themselves highly if they be much sought after and yield not readily under such circumstances. You lack courage and at the first repulse throw away your arms and fly as if the citadel were impregnable. Even I could do better," Alexander answered, striving to cheer the other.

"I would you would try, for she will no longer grant me access to her presence."

"It is but pique, Pausanias, or a trick to try your constancy. You are jealous and she tortures you, for you were ever her favorite, if I remember aright, and women do not change thus quickly."

"Their love cools with time and ambitious dreams, oh Prince. Then they welcome the snow and chill of winter not less joyfully than the opening buds of spring."

"Not so. The flower of Cleopatra's life has scarce opened and has as yet lost no part of its fragrant sweetness. She knows naught, more than you or I, of the chill of age, and so her heart cannot have changed as you imagine."

"If that be so her vanity or the scheming of her uncle, who exhibits her charms as one would a horse in the open market, have wrought the change, for change there is."

"Attalus would pawn his wife to gain preferment with the King, and so having a selfish purpose, may have

sought to influence her against you. But if it be so, why give way to despair? Men do not yield in such matters to the will of others," Alexander answered, thinking of Roxana.

"Do you advise me thus, oh Prince? You! The King's son!" Pausanias cried, starting back and gazing on Alexander in astonishment, not knowing that the latter was ignorant of the intrigue between the King and Cleopatra.

"Yes, by all the Gods. Why not? Men's desires in such things, being honorable to them, should not be lightly abandoned. Nay, were the King himself to command me I would not yield were I in your place. No! A hundred times no!" Alexander cried, still thinking of Roxana.

"Then, oh Prince, do you come to my assistance; do you plead my cause. Thus I may succeed; may still hope to win her. Alone I shall fail, and doing so curse the day that I was born."

"How can I aid you? Men must act for themselves in such matters," Alexander answered decisively.

"Not in such a case as this, oh Prince. Attalus may not turn you away, and Cleopatra holds you in such high regard that I was once jealous of her preferment lest it meant something deeper," Pausanias mournfully responded.

"Foolishly, you see, and without cause, as in the present case. Indeed, so sure am I that her love has not cooled that I will lay a wager that it has not, if you are so inclined."

"I accept the wager, oh Prince, and if it turn out as you imagine I will gladly spend all I have to pay the

debt. Lose no time then, oh friend, in seeking her, lest you be too late," Pausanias pleaded.

"If I consent to do you this favor, be not idle, but hasten to the King and enlist his good offices in your behalf," Alexander cried, and without waiting for a response hastily left the palace. Emerging an hour later from the city gate of the fortress, he was attended by a troop of horse and a score of pages, all mounted like himself on steeds richly caparisoned. This as if he wished to clothe his mission with every formality of kingly dignity and grace likely to add to its success. A purple cloak lined with satin enveloped the Prince's shoulders, and from the kausia that covered his head, and which only the King or he might wear, waving feathers gracefully drooped. Beneath his cloak a silken coat covered his body, his waist being girt about by a rich belt from which a jeweled sword hung suspended. White doeskin breeches, fitting close, covered his limbs, and to complete his costume, soft boots of deer-skin, with dangling tassels, encased his feet and lower extremities. The bridles of the highly spirited horses which the cavalcade bestrode, like the woolen blankets that served for seats, were of creamy white, while from the head-stalls of the prancing steeds, red plumes nodded in the morning air. Riding close about the Prince, the crimson cloaks of the pages and the trailing feathers that adorned their hats, gave to the cavalcade a kingly air well befitting the love of splendor that characterized Alexander throughout his life.

Slowly pursuing his way, the citizens and soldiers crowding the street filled the air with the cry, "The

Prince! The Prince!" watching him with love and friendly comment long after he had passed.

Reaching the stately dwelling of Attalus the gay cavalcade entered the court that hemmed it in, the Prince bowing and smiling in response to the salutations of the throng gathered about the wide enclosure. Dismounting and leaving his horse in charge of the waiting grooms, he entered the palace unattended.

Attalus, the uncle of Cleopatra, whose place of residence Alexander now visited, was one of the richest and most powerful noblemen of Macedonia. A high officer in the army, the King made him his companion and intimate. For he was like Philip in his appetites; or, if not like him, made it so appear, joining with the King in all his revels and applauding his vices more than his noble qualities. Indeed, it was through Philip's weaknesses, as in the case of most men, that this great noble attached himself to the King's person. Attalus' wealth and ever growing influence made him so great a factor in the affairs of his country that it was feared by many he would sooner or later aspire to the throne. Now, all the boundless resources of this resolute and ambitious noble were directed to the successful consummation of the great intrigue he had in hand, the marriage of his niece to the King. For it was little else than an intrigue, in the light of Cleopatra's youth and the age of Philip and his numerous wives and concubines. However, Cleopatra made no objection to the union because of this, but seconded the efforts of her uncle by every device that could excite the satiated passions of the blasé and dissolute King. Indeed, the concord between uncle and niece

seemed to bear out, what many thought, and others gave utterance to, that the relations between the two were of a more delicate nature than their kinship warranted. To further the marriage, Attalus gave out that at his death Cleopatra would inherit all his wealth. But this was a gratuitous gift, for the beautiful and accomplished woman held the King's mind and passions in such thralldom that he was ready to sacrifice the peace of his family and the good of his kingdom to consummate his marriage with the entrancing creature.

Cleopatra was, at this time, twenty years of age and possessed, withal, of a full and voluptuous beauty that seemed rather to belong to the south than the cold, inhospitable climate of Macedonia. Apprised of Alexander's visit, she waited to receive him, her resplendent charms aided by every art that could enhance their worth. As she reclined in graceful abandon on a silken divan, beneath an overhanging canopy embossed with gold, she had the impatient air of a Queen awaiting the advent of a favored suitor. Her graceful head was crowned with a pointed diadem of gold about which diminishing circles of pearls were wound in profuse ornamentation. Her Grecian robe of purple, transparent in texture and heavily embroidered with silver and gold spangles, was cut low so as to fully display her swan-like neck and voluptuous bosom. In all save this, her garments were rather Oriental than Grecian. Indeed, except for her blue eyes and pink complexion one would have said she belonged rather to Susa than to Greece. About her slender waist a broad girdle of beaten gold, inlaid with rare jewels, served to confine her dress which fell in graceful folds

about her tall and willowy figure. From her girdle woven panels of gold and silver studded with jewels reached to her feet. Strings of pearls fastened with turquoise and richly studded with rubies formed a resplendent collar about her beautiful neck. Her abundant hair, which was of a dark golden color, was adorned with clusters and festoons of pearls, held in place by golden clasps. About her wrists and beautiful arms, and encasing her ankles,—which showed above her satin slippers,—bracelets and bands of gold, richly studded with jewels, were clasped. In complement to these, and that nothing should be wanting to enhance her every charm, the fingers of her white and shapely hands were covered with jeweled rings of rare design and richness. To complete her costume and give piquancy and charm to her beautiful hands and arms, she carried a turquoise fan adorned with sapphires and shaped after the form of a lotus leaf.

As Alexander entered the stately saloon in which Cleopatra reclined, the graceful beauty, rising to her feet, hurried forward, and meeting him in the middle of the room, knelt in gracious homage and kissed his hand.

"Do you come thus early and in such state, chivalrous Prince, to welcome my return to Pella?" she asked in charming confusion, as he raised her to her feet. "I have been so long away I feared you had forgotten me or your friendship had grown cold," she concluded, her face lighting up with undisguised pleasure, as he led her to the divan she had just left, and seated himself by her side.

"I have not so many friends of my youth, sweet Princess, that one can be away without my sorrowing, or re-

turn without my hastening to welcome her home," he answered, surveying the beautiful creature with undisguised admiration.

"Do you find me changed, as I do you, and for the better if that were possible?" she replied archly, gazing into his attractive countenance with rapt eyes.

"No, sweet Princess, unless you have grown more beautiful were such a thing possible," he answered, with the frank candor of a friend.

"For shame, oh Prince, to flatter the trusting companion of your youth. While I have been absent you, it is plain, have learned the courtier's trick of saying pleasant things," she answered, scanning his face. "But however lightly you may speak, I have ever sought to gain your favor. You; whom so many strive in vain to please."

"I could scarce pay an undeserved compliment, sweet Princess, to one who has enslaved the hearts of so many gallant noblemen that their sighs fill the court like a summer gale," Alexander replied, pleased that she should receive him with so much favor.

"Those I care least to please annoy me with their importunities, while those I most esteem have remained indifferent or coldly silent," she answered, gazing into his face as if to find there some response to her frank avowal.

"If that be true, they, not you, have been the losers. But where so many would win approval you can scarce know your own heart for bewilderment of numbers and the earnestness with which they plead their cause."

"Woman's love cannot be confused, but stands out all the more clearly from comparison of numbers. You, oh

Prince, who dream only of war and how to acquit yourself in battle, know not what love is or the longings of our hearts, having no heart yourself."

"If I have seemed not to have a heart heretofore it was but seeming," he answered with a sigh, thinking of Roxana and the passion that consumed him.

"Then we distressed mortals, who have long felt its burden, may now hope for some measure of sympathy. Come, sweet Prince," she went on, laying her hand on his, "confess to me your secret, as if I were your love, for in nothing can I refuse to further your desires, however much you have been led to believe the contrary," she concluded, thinking of the King's suit.

"Nay, I come not, sweet Princess, to lay my heart bare, for its throbbing would find no response in the breast of another, but to fulfill a promise to one so desperately enamored and hopelessly, as he believes, that I forget my own passion in sympathy for his."

"It were risking less, sweet Prince, were you to lay bare your own love, for naught, not even the King's pleasure, nay, his positive command, would avail aught with me against the desires of his son," she answered, with passionate earnestness.

"My errand is not of such high consequence, oh Princess, but goes no further than to reawaken in your heart the love you once bore my friend, if indeed you have ceased to look upon him with like favor."

"Such pleading were idle, sweet Prince, but who is it that thus enlists your good offices, if indeed you really come as the envoy of another?" she answered, showing her heart as in a mirror.

"One you have ever regarded with friendship, and 'twas thought with a passion far deeper," he answered, hesitating whether it were better to advance or recede.

"Then you are serious in what you say, oh Prince. I had thought it mere pleasantry," she answered, her brow darkening with vexation.

"He thinks it most serious, and I as well, sweet Princess, else I would not come to plead his cause. Indeed, he will kill himself or do some other desperate thing if you deny him, so distraught is he with the melancholy that consumes him."

"I care not if he do, nor how quickly. But who is this love-sick fool that enlists so great a personage to plead his cause?" she answered impatiently.

"No other than the noble Pausanias, Cleopatra. He believes you once loved him and may again look upon him with favor, if not restrained by your august uncle. Nay, do not take it unkindly," the Prince went on, observing her clouded face. "Try to think of him with some favor, for he is so consumed by his mad passion that he is but a shadow of his former self."

"Do you come, sweet Prince, to plead the cause of that weakling, foregoing your own love in his vain longings? You are more generous than most men, but unavailingly, as you would see, if you knew aught of the hearts of women," she exclaimed, striving to read his thoughts in his open face.

"I have erred, and foolishly, sweet Princess, in believing you might still look upon Pausanias with favor. Now nothing is left me but to crave your pardon and

take my leave," Alexander answered, unable, simple Prince, to understand the passion she evinced.

"I never regarded his love except as a pleasantry, and if I led him on 'twas as I would bend a horse to my will, other diversion being denied me. There! do not speak of him again. If I have done wrong, upbraid me. Call me what you will, Alexander, for your reproaches are far sweeter to my ears than the pleadings of another," she answered, her voice tremulous with passion.

"No, I will not weary you further and am justly reproved, sweet Princess, for meddling in things about which I know so little," he answered, rising to his feet with flushed face.

"What I deny him with scorn I might lay down my life to grant another if he but spoke the word," she answered, pulling him down beside her. "It were more kingly for the Prince of Macedonia to make known his own passion than to plead the cause of another. Nay, you shall not go till you have divulged the love that consumes you. You were ever thus modest, leaving unsaid what other and less noble men make haste to avow," she concluded, her passion overpowering her reason.

"If youth and thoughts of other things have kept my heart still till now it beats at last with greater passion, because of the long denial," he replied, lost to her words in thoughts of Roxana.

"Feeling at last its fierce throbbings, will you lose forever what you most desire, by longer evasion?" she answered softly, caressing his hand.

"I dare not now divulge my love, sweet Princess, for I may not yet brave the King, who will by no means look

with favor on my suit at this time," he responded, conjuring up the obstacles Philip would throw in the way of his union with Roxana.

"Are you the conqueror of Cheronea, to permit the King, however august, to step between you and your heart's desire at such a moment? Fie, Alexander, I thought you great only to find you weaker than Pausanias," she cried, scornfully, striving to spur him on to avow his passion.

"I may not now stand out against the King's will, sweet friend, but in the end and in my own time will have my way," Alexander cried, the vision of Roxana growing more entrancing with every obstacle that intervened.

"And waiting long, poor Prince, gain at last what another leaves. Nay, you shall not be put off, for I love you, Alexander, and were he who opposes a thousand times the King it would not matter. Do not turn away, sweet Prince, for, responding to my determined will, Philip must yield. Speak but the word, my love, and his opposition will quickly give place to kind indulgence," she concluded, throwing her arm about the Prince's neck and burying her face in his bosom.

Astonished and confounded, Alexander, overwhelmed with regret and shame, was for a long time speechless. At last, regaining his voice, he cried:

"Do not weep nor reproach yourself, sweet Princess,—but kill me, for I deserve no less fate. See! Here is my uncovered breast and here your poniard. No other thing becomes my honor, for what you ask, however idly, is now impossible, my heart being pledged to another, as I

have told you," he concluded, humiliated and stricken at the unhappy plight of his fair companion.

Hearing him through she pushed him from her, pale and distraught, striving to uphold herself and hide the shame that burned her cheeks. At last, lifting her head, there came into her eyes a look of such despair and deadly hatred, that he sought again to soothe her with some word of entreaty and self-abasement.

"Was it for this, brave Prince," she cried, disregarding what he said, "that you led me on so cunningly, pretending a love you dared not avow? If so, you have achieved your end and I am undone, and my shame revealed to the scorn of all the world," she went on, scarce able to speak.

"Not knowingly did I mislead you, gracious Princess, but spoke in all honesty of the love that burns in my heart. Coming to plead the cause of Pausanias I knew not, nor dreamed, that you thought more of me than another," he answered, little knowing what he said, so great was the regret and shame that consumed him.

"It matters little what you thought," she cried, her face white with rage; "my shame is the more apparent because of it. But my revenge shall be so great that my folly will be forgotten in its contemplation; for, though you be the Prince, neither your rank nor the obscurity of your Persian mistress shall avail to stay my hand. There, go! As your wife I would have saved your mother's honor and upheld your hopes of being King. Now I will live but to blast the one and destroy the other."

"I cannot excuse myself nor forego your hate, nor wonder at its fury, though the cause of it shall remain

forever a secret, unthought of by man or woman. But let your vengeance pursue me, whom you alone have cause to hate, nor waste itself on those who have given you no cause of offense," Alexander cried, his anger rising at the other's tigerish fury.

"No! no! no! By all the Gods!" she cried. "Except for this adventuress you would not have thus rejected me, to my undoing; and so my deadly hate shall pursue both you and her so long as either of you lives to shame my sight."

"Do to me what you will, but the Persian Princess is the nation's guest, and the person of a suppliant is not more sacred. Do not transgress the laws of hospitality lest you die a shameful death and the land be accursed by the Gods," Alexander cried, and turning about he made his way to the open court where his attendants awaited his coming. Nor would he have seen the King, who entered the enclosure as he mounted his horse, had not Demetrius plucked him by the sleeve, crying out as he did so:

"The King!"

Saluting him, Alexander waited, but Philip, staring at him blankly, uttered not a word, save to exclaim, as he entered the palace:

"You do well, oh Prince, to welcome the Princess Cleopatra thus early and with such show of royal pomp."

Returning to the fortress Alexander found Pausanias impatiently awaiting him in the outer court. The latter, observing the Prince's stern countenance and bowed head, drew his sword and would have fallen upon it had not the Prince, seeing the motion, put it aside.

"Return your sword to its place, Pausanias. Men do not kill themselves save to avert disgrace or for some unmerited sorrow," Alexander cried, as he stayed the other's hand.

"Speak no ill word of her, oh Prince, lest forgetting your sovereign rank, I bury my sword in your heart instead of my own," Pausanias answered, in a despairing voice.

"Nay, I said nothing in disparagement of the Princess. Go your way and live, man, for you have no just cause to kill yourself," Alexander exclaimed impatiently.

"Men may not live, oh Prince, without food to feed the heart and some ray of sunshine to light the way, and I have neither."

"Wounds like yours do not kill, nor remain long unhealed. Time and occupation will cure the sore; or, that failing, a spear thrust or kindly blade in the forefront of battle will give you release and your memory honor. Nor need you wait long, for the King's service offers such chances every day," Alexander answered contemptuously.

"To Hades with the King and all who uphold the monster," Pausanias cried in rage, as he turned and fled from the fortress.

Deeply troubled and unable to comprehend much that he had heard and seen, Alexander entered the palace, to find a balm if he might, for his sore and mortified heart, in Roxana's sweet companionship.

"Whither in such haste, Iskander?" a voice called to him from an alcove, hidden by trailing vines, as he hurried forward.

"That I may be the sooner in your company, sweet child, for all the world save you are crazy, or bent upon some base and ignoble purpose," he answered, entering the recess and seating himself by her side.

"What besets you that your brow should be thus clouded and your eyes so deeply troubled, Iskander?" she responded, lifting his hand to her lips.

"Naught, my love, that time and your sweet companionship will not heal," he answered, kissing her on the cheek.

"Where have you been, Iskander? I thought surely to see you when the King received the embassy, scarce a half hour ago. Every one was there save you, and you only would I have missed. You must not be away so long again, sweet love; for when you are not near me I have such sinking of the heart, such forebodings and fear of the future, that my eyes are dim with the tears I cannot repress, nor give a reason why they flow."

"You have no cause to fear, sweet love, nor am I ever willingly absent from your side. For when I am away it is to wish I were near you; and being there, to wish again that I might never leave your side. Oh, I am filled with such longing for your presence when absent that I would gladly give up all I have before most prized, that I might spend every moment of my life in your sweet company," he answered, clasping her in his arms and kissing her hair and neck in his mad passion.

"I knew some business kept you, but oh, the happiness of being near you and the fear of losing you in this wild country, make me jealous of every moment that you are absent. But I will no longer give voice to my unhappy

fears, Iskander, lest you tire of me. Come, sweet love," she went on, striving to speak more cheerfully, "what business kept you from my side?"

"The King's coming and the welcome I owed him filled the morning hour. Afterwards a friendly mission took me into the city, and most unhappily, as it turned out. But tell me, sweet love, did the King receive you with all kindness?"

"Yes, and in such regal state that I could scarce find my voice when he spoke to me. Surely more kingly man never sat upon a throne, Iskander. There is such dignity and graciousness, such sense of strength and power, in all he does and says that no one can look upon him unmoved. Nay, I had almost said without fear," she answered, her face lighting up at the recollection. "And except that matters of state prevent his giving the subject of my father's mission present attention, his gracious reception of the embassy was all that could have been desired by the most exacting."

"Did he single you out, sweet love, to pay you some particular attention?" Alexander asked with pleasurable anxiety.

"Yes, and most marked, my love. For once I was presented he kept me by his side and, as opportunity offered, took occasion to say the most kind and courteous things of my father and his mission. So that I came away feeling I had achieved a triumph in being so highly honored by so great a King."

Nor did Alexander say aught to dispel the pleasant illusion, albeit the deep and subtle character of Philip prevented him attaching any importance to his kindly

action or favoring speech, save as it might serve some purpose of the state.

"I am glad that the greatness of the King, for he is truly great, is honored by your sweet confidence, my love. But come, tell me something of yourself. Do Ossa and the guard I have placed about your quarters tire or incommode you in any way? And the pages set apart to attend you, do they, too, fill your expectations?"

"Yes, and I would not have a thing different from what you have arranged, love. Ossa, never obtruding, has yet such tact and circumspection that, unseen, I have but to raise my voice and he responds. Or, if it is a page I desire, they know my wish ere I call. I would that I could always have Ossa, Iskander, for when he is near I feel such certainty and security of person that the newness and strangeness of everything loses half its terrors," Roxana answered, with loving confidence.

"He shall be near you, sweet love, and his gentle wife whom he has reclaimed from bondage. That is to be their life as I have fixed it, and as they agree, thinking it honorable above all other gifts I could bestow. Let him be as your shadow, Roxana, for it will be to him an office of love. Go not abroad, even so far as the battlements of the fortress, without his presence. If he be always armed it is a thing made necessary, for our people, not always respecting the laws of hospitality as the Gods command, may seek to do you harm. Because of this I beg of you, sweet child, do as I say and trust not yourself abroad unattended," Alexander exclaimed with impassioned speech, thinking of Cleopatra's threat.

"No! Nor will I feel it irksome to be thus strangely

guarded, or think you over careful," she answered, pulling his face to her and kissing him.

"It is not thought strange to go thus attended, sweet love, since the King's conquests have filled Macedonia with discontented slaves and half savage barbarians from the countries that lie about us. But most, I fear the intrigues and jealous hatred of those about the court. Guard yourself from these hidden foes, for here Ossa's strong arm cannot save you."

"You speak always of me, Iskander. But you are not more safe than I, although among your own people. Lately I have seen Mithrines and Amyntas much together and often in secret conference, as if hatching a plot. If you in your fear set apart a guard for me, haste to take one for yourself, for Mithrines will by no means go back to Persia without making some attempt against you; and what more pliant tool could he seek than Amyntas, who hates you and aspires to the throne, though you trust him as if he had no cause of complaint against your house. Oh, Iskander, when my sweet pages recount to me the stories of princes and kings of Macedonia entrapped and foully murdered, my heart stops its beating in fear for you."

"If I seem to trust those about me who have just cause of grievance, sweet love, it is with the hope of winning them to the state and without lessening the vigilance that no Prince of Macedonia can disregard with safety to his country or his own person," Alexander answered confidently.

"The danger ever comes when least expected, for such is the history of Macedonia. If you have lived thus far

unmolested, it is because the people love you, and fear has restrained the hands of those who would be benefited by your death. Quit your careless security, Iskander, while you may," she pleaded, as if clearly foreseeing the tragedies that loomed like a thunder cloud about his kingly house.

"My love for you and the fear that I may lose you, I know not how, has so changed my nature that I no longer know myself, sweet Princess. And already on my way here, as if affrighted, I have planned to surround myself with such steadfast friends that neither treason nor private enmity can find an opening. Now, that attended to, my whole thought is of you, and the tender love I bear you," Alexander answered, putting his arm about her as if only thus could he guard her from the enmity of Cleopatra.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DECEIVED KING.

Amyntas, ever on the watch, being quickly apprised of the great state in which Alexander had left the fortress, mounted a horse and followed after, to learn the object of his strange visit. Reaching the palace of Attalus, he dismounted and, privileged by his kingly rank, followed to the great room in which the Prince had been received by Cleopatra. And this without being observed by the attendants, as the Princess had purposely sent them away, desiring the interview to be private. Reaching the entrance Amyntas stood still, concealed behind the heavy curtains, undetermined whether to go forward or remain where he was. While thus hesitating the voices of those within clearly reaching his ears, he determined to remain and listen. Thus, securely hidden and unsuspecting the nature of Alexander's visit, he heard Cleopatra's passionate avowal. Thunderstruck, he stood still, wondering at its strangeness and pondering on the use he might make of it. And presently, Alexander taking his departure, he hurriedly entered the Princess' apartment, and throwing himself on his knees before her, caught her hand and kissing it with deep show of reverence, exclaimed:

"Coming unannounced to greet you, oh Queen, I heard, in spite of my great reluctance, the Prince's mad declaration of love and your imperious refusal of his shameful

proposal. Had he been less exalted in rank I should have rushed forward and cut him down, but as it was I stood dumfounded and helpless," he concluded in a passion, as if overwhelmed by his anger.

"You heard his declaration? You!" she cried, starting back frightened and bewildered.

"Most plainly, oh Queen, so that I could scarce restrain myself, as I say. Hearing your words of censure and scorn I waited somewhat appeased. Now he has gone, to my shame I hasten to protest against the great indignity, knowing you to be pledged to the King," he answered with servile humility.

"Refusing him, if he be not base beyond our conception of common men, that will end his importunities," she answered, regaining her composure in some measure.

"Nay, it will but urge him on, oh Queen, to greater indignities. Such is his nature, as every one knows. Nor will he take refusal once he has made up his mind," Amyntas answered with assured voice.

"What can I do, noble Prince, a weak and timid woman? Surely I may trust myself to your honor and greater wisdom," she exclaimed beseechingly, laying her hand on his arm.

"If you would put a stop forever to this suit so compromising to your honor, you must lose no time in enlisting the aid of the King. If he be told of Alexander's striving for your love, it will instantly destroy all affection he may have for his son. In its place deadly hatred will fill his heart and mind, and thus you will be free and, secure in power, may reign as Queen undisturbed," Amyntas answered with eager confidence.

"No! great Prince. The King would never believe Alexander could be so base; so treacherous as a son and subject."

"He must believe it if you aver it to be true, oh Queen. Besides, did I not hear the avowal? Nay, every word that was said?" Amyntas concluded, eying the Princess with questioning glance.

Understanding all too clearly the other's covert meaning Cleopatra, deeply disturbed, trembled and turned pale But quickly recovering herself she answered with firm assurance:

"Yes, 'tis true; the King will not doubt my word! No! Not if I condemned half the court, so great is his passion. Occasion, moreover, may arise by which you may confirm it, noble Prince, if he questions you," she answered adroitly.

"I will, with such definiteness and persistency that he will thank me while he curses the Prince for his base treason."

"Be circumspect in what you say, and let it be rather by reflection than frank disclosure, lest an open rupture be untimely precipitated," Cleopatra answered, restraining him with voice and gesture.

"I will be governed in everything by your greater wisdom, oh Queen. Aggrieved and insulted it is for you to indicate the nature and measure of Alexander's punishment," Amyntas humbly replied.

"Thanks, noble Prince, I will not fail to remember and treasure your kindness when I am Queen. There, go, my good friend. I hear the trumpet announcing the King's coming," she exclaimed, offering her hand to Amyntas to kiss.

Taking his departure by one of the interior doors of the spacious chamber, the opening had scarce closed behind him when an attendant, throwing wide the curtains which hid the main entrance, cried:

"The King!"

Hurrying forward, little regardful of his regal dignity, Philip stopped short, astonished and perplexed at what he saw. For Cleopatra hastened not to receive him as he had thought, but lay outstretched in abandonment upon the floor, her form trembling with suppressed emotion. Making no movement to rise or greet him, the King, after a moment's hesitation and doubt, hastened to her side and lifted her up. Feeling his arms about her she cried with passionate energy:

"Have you come back, oh Prince, to torture me further with your cruel avowal of love?"

"Look up, Cleopatra! It is I, Philip, the King, my sweet Queen, who comes to embrace and greet you," he cried bewildered.

Hearing him she started up with a wild cry, tearing herself from his arms as if his touch poisoned her. Thus she stood with uplifted head and flushed face confronting him, but presently stilling her passion, she approached him and putting her arms fondly about his neck, cried as if stricken with grief and shame:

"I am debased and polluted, gracious King, and no longer worthy of your love or confidence, so great is my humiliation and despair," and releasing him she held down her head in abject shame.

"Polluted! Debased! My Queen, what mean you by such speech? Scarce waiting to refresh myself I hurry

to your side in fond expectation, and coming find you thus," he cried, regarding her with a look of astonishment, in which his deep passion was clearly apparent.

"Why did you delay at all, oh King? Now you come all too late to save me the foul shame that has been put upon me by your princely son."

"Alexander? Nay; he came to greet you as a friend, not to cast shame upon you," the King answered, unable to comprehend her meaning.

"So he may have told you, gracious King, and you being all honor and loyalty believed him, but far different was the purpose of his cruel errand," she answered, allowing her face to rest beside his in soft embrace, as he bent over her.

"What other purpose could he have had unless it was to chide you for the love we bear each other? But of that I thought he, of all the world, was ignorant," the King answered with lowering brow. "Come, my Queen, tell me his mission here, if that it was that distresses you."

"I dare not, gracious King, lest in your anger you kill him," she answered, feigning fear.

"Kill him! What do you mean? For I know not what to think or say, so greatly am I disturbed and confused," the King answered with fixed look and lowering brow.

"I would leave you, too, in happy ignorance, Philip, lest the love you have borne the Prince be turned to hate and deadly murder," she answered with hesitating voice, stroking his face with her soft hand.

"Torture me no longer, sweet Princess. Tell me his offense, and quickly. Of its punishment I must be the

judge," the King cried, his face purple with rage and dismay.

"Spare me the anguish of telling it, oh King, for I dare not speak," she answered, clasping him about the neck beseechingly.

"Speak, I command you! Naught that concerns her I am so soon to wed, my Queen, can be hidden from me."

"If I obey it is because I can deny you nothing, Philip. Not though my heart be wrung with regret and anguish. But of the telling, oh King, naught shall be divulged lest I kill myself for shame," she answered, imploring him with uplifted hands.

"Go on, Cleopatra! Try not my patience longer," the King exclaimed, holding her at arm's length.

"When the Prince came, if you command me to obey you, cruel King, I received him kindly, overjoyed at his quick coming and the friendship it evinced; but straightway losing all interest in my inquiries concerning you and the campaign in Greece, he said you were greatly broken by wine and numberless crimes against women and so must soon die, or living, the burdens of the state must rest on younger shoulders. Thus he would be king in name or in fact within the year. But, oh Philip, I cannot, I cannot tell you all he said," she cried, burying her face in his bosom.

"Go on, I command you," he answered, putting his arm about her. "Not a word shall you omit."

"When I would have protested that you were still young and might look forward to thirty years of kingly life, he would not let me speak," she went on with seeming reluctance. "Softly insinuating that some grievous

and secret ailment, of which I was ignorant, forbade to you a great stretch of life, he asked that I cast you off, Philip, and wed him instead. Enraged at his baseness, I bade him leave me, but growing violent at my refusal he threatened me with disgrace and death if I stood out against him. At last, when I had twice refused him with bitter reproaches, he caught me about the waist in a mad frenzy of passion, such as is peculiar to his mother, Olympias, and cast me down at his feet as you found me," she concluded, wringing her hands as if forced by the King's will to be thus particular.

"By the Gods, can I have been dreaming all this while! The base wretch shall answer for his treachery and disloyalty with his life," the King cried in a choked voice.

"Be not too hasty in judging him, Philip. He is accustomed to indulgences at your hands, and this is but the sequence to what has gone before. Nor does he think it out of place, believing he will soon reign in your stead," she answered, covering her face as if overcome.

"He reign! No; by the Gods no! He deserves death rather, or banishment, if mercy may be accorded him. To be king within the year! 'Tis a plot, Cleopatra, hatched by his tigress mother, and a sword thrust is all that is necessary to leave the throne empty, as he says," the King exclaimed, purple with rage.

"Passion is not natural to you in such a thing, gracious King," she answered, seemingly frightened. "Be not too hasty in what you say or do, lest the army that adores him, as if he were its child, be led astray, and so condemn your action and those who love you."

"It will not! It dare not! It is my creature. Unkempt

slingers and half-clad bowmen, armed with wicker shields and charred pikes, I made it what it is; and it will obey me in all things as will every one, however exalted their rank," the King answered with angry vehemence.

"The vanity and ambition of the Prince will lead him to think differently, Philip, but I being by your side may guard your bed and so preserve you from the treason that threatens the throne; for I tremble at your return to Pella, oh King, lest some snare be already laid to bring about your death," she exclaimed, clinging to him as if crazed with apprehension.

"Fear not, my Queen. Our marriage, too long put off, shall be consummated ere the day closes. It were better thus than with noisy ceremony, amid the clang of trumpets and gaping crowds and the chattering gossips of the Court. That done, all discussion will cease. Your gracious presence, once my Queen, will stay the steps of the wavering if any such there be. Oh Alexander!" the King went on with sorrowing voice, "You whom I have loved, to betray me in so base and cowardly a manner. Fool that I was to trust him, when like folly has cost so many kings of Macedonia their lives and thrones. But I will find a way to curb his over-weening ambition, and in the end one more worthy shall follow me on the throne," the King concluded, raising his hand aloft.

"If he be false, not all your children are tainted with treason, Philip. Or it may be, gracious King, that from our union, respondent to our fervent desire, a prince may be born worthy to succeed you on the throne," she exclaimed with eager fondness.

"Antipater has been deceived not less than I," the King

went on musingly, "for he told me scarce an hour ago that Alexander was enamored of the Persian Princess, having no thought but of her nor any desire save to be in her presence."

"It is but a ruse, Philip, to mislead you and those you trust; or if there be truth in the story he would have a plurality of wives, as his kingly fathers have had before him. But come, Philip," she went on, encircling him with both her arms, "let us dismiss this most unhappy subject and enjoy the sweet hour while we may. I have lived only in its expectation since last my heart was stirred by your gracious presence, and now it is disturbed by the intrigues of those who should love and shield you. Come, my adored, you have told me naught of the coming banquet about which every one is already talking,—no, nor asked me to view it with the others," she answered, kissing him.

"It was this and your sweet presence that brought me here," he answered, caressing her. "Amyntas, who loves such things, has it in charge; and that the women may have every freedom he has planned that they shall come in masks, if they will, and so view the spectacle from the surrounding balcony."

"Will those about the court come thus disguised? And the Persian woman?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, and most surprising, the gracious Roxana, to do greater honor to the festival, will come robed and masked as the Persian queen. But this in confidence, as she does not wish her identity disclosed," the King went on, his anger forgotten. "I will not ask your disguise, sweet Princess, being sure that naught can long hide your lovely

form from my expectant eyes. But come, let us go seek the princely Attalus, for know, most persecuted of princesses, I will not leave the palace until you have become my queen, and so are safe from future indignities," and overpowered by his passion, he kissed her on her open bosom, as he put his arm about her and led her away.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONSPIRACY.

"Why this turmoil, this rearrangement, these hurried decorations, exalted Prince?" Mithrines cried, accosting Amyntas, who stood in the center of the great court, watching the slaves placing furniture and fixing plants and flowers about the wide enclosure.

"It is in preparation for the banquet which the King gives tonight," the other answered laconically.

"Tonight?" Mithrines exclaimed, feigning surprise.

"Yes."

"Why, he has but this moment returned."

"'Tis his way, and that he may pay greater honor to your embassy, he avers," Amyntas answered with a shrug of his shoulders. "Others say it has another object and one he esteems far more important."

"What is the secret he conceals under this haste to show hospitality to the Persian envoys?"

"To proclaim his marriage with Cleopatra. 'Tis a thing he may the more boldly tell being drunk, for in such state he will have less fear of Alexander's anger, which the announcement is sure to excite."

"Alexander's anger!" Mithrines answered contemptuously. "A love-sick fool, with eyes and ears only for Roxana, living and dreaming in a world apart. What manner of prince is this about whom such brave stories

are told, Amyntas? I would my master's enemies were all like him. We would quickly seat you on the throne and there would be an end to his fears, and I might return to Sardis and the life of civilized men."

"You had better have stayed at home, oh friend, if coming here you read Alexander no better," Amyntas answered dryly.

"How else can I read him? He has no mind for affairs and lives only in his mistress' voice or sits spellbound gazing into her eyes. I thought him a man of enterprise ere reaching Greece. But he has no ambition, no fire, and his temper is of such softness that it were an offense against good manners to bait him," Mithrines responded with a laugh of disdain.

"You mistake the spell he is under for the man, for he is nothing if not fire, Mithrines. Not hidden and smouldering as with Philip, but striking and vivid like the forked lightning. The King's purposes are ever concealed, and he could not be open if he would. A fox playing among the young pigs is Philip's natural self. But Alexander knows not what dissimulation is, and when aroused has neither thought nor moderation, but like a fierce tempest uproots and crushes all who withstand him. This savage spirit comes from his barbarian mother and brooks no opposition save from friends, and then only within the limits of his princely dignity. A dozen Philips were less dangerous to Persian greatness, oh Lydian, than one Alexander aroused to action," Amyntas answered, sobered at the thought of the Prince's fierce nature.

"Exaggerated greatness! A harmless lamb masquer-

ading as a lion. It is with Philip we have to deal, and he out of the way we may do with the other what we will."

"Philip removed and Alexander left, you will have gained nothing. Once he is King his father's contemplated conquests will seem trifling things to what he will achieve," Amyntas answered confidently. "No, they must die together, oh Persian, and tonight's banquet will afford the opportunity we have sought. Alexander will not sit still and see his mother disgraced, and in the turmoil that will ensue both the bear and the cub may be skinned," Amyntas concluded, as if speaking of a thing already accomplished.

"Philip and Alexander are more like lovers than King and subject. This every one avers and the Prince has such esteem for his father, and what he calls Philip's greatness, that it will be no easy task to array one against the other."

"Such a slight will be put upon him tonight that were he of craven heart he could not be quiet under it."

"Who will do this and hope to live? Not even the King would dare brave his chivalrous son thus openly, though Alexander's loyalty is said to be such that he would not harm him were he to lose the throne thereby," Mithrines answered, seeking to excite Amyntas' jealousy of Alexander.

"Attalus, who hopes to benefit by the quarrel, as he does by the marriage of his niece, will be the instrument, and while he thinks only to destroy Alexander, the King, too, shall fall," Amyntas replied decisively.

"By what cunningly devised plan do you hope to

achieve things so fraught with advantage to you, and so fatal to all concerned if the conspiracy should unhappily miscarry? Though I have loaded your friends with gold and clothed them in princely raiment, yet they will not risk their lives to further your ends; and should the plot fail, tomorrow's sun will not find one head upon the shoulders of those who are concerned in the dangerous project," Mithrines answered doubtingly, to test the other's resolution.

"One were but a sorry conspirator, Mithrines, whose safety depended upon his plots succeeding, for such things are a lottery, as you Persians know better than other men. Four times you attempted Alexander's life ere reaching Pella, and failing each time was yet able to avert suspicion from yourself."

"I am not sure of that, good friend. Alexander is such believer in the Gods and their regard for strangers that, though he knew I conspired, yet would he not for such act harm me while I remained in Macedonia," Mithrines answered, as if he admired the Prince.

"May his Gods in like manner protect him when the naked sword opens his throat," Amyntas answered savagely. "Go your way, good friend. It were not best we be seen too much together. But be not tardy at the banquet, and if by chance it end in darkness you may still see my weapon open a way to the throne of which I have been robbed."

"The Prince is not the kind of a man to stand like a Theban pig till his enemy pricks him, nor will he wallow in wine like his father and so become an easy prey. I greatly fear the outcome of your project, good friend.

They told me ere I came that you were cautious to timidity, oh Prince, and so explained your absence from the throne. Nay, your enemies said you better became the peaceful avocation of the shepherd than the kingship of a war-like people. I thought to drill you like a half-hearted mercenary in the struggle to overthrow Philip; but coming, find you more forward than discreet."

"Hush!" Amyntas angrily interposed, "till I put some heart in this craven wretch who would possess the peerless Cleopatra, but dare not strike a blow to win her," Amyntas went on, saluting Pausanias as the latter approached. "What!" he cried, as the other sought to pass on unmindful of his presence, "is all hope dead, noble friend, that you carry yourself so gloomily amid the cheerful preparations for the marriage-feast? I thought you more worthy of woman's love!"

"Cease, Amyntas, for I am in no mood to listen to your raillery," Pausanias answered, without lifting his head.

"Call you the distress of those who offer you loving service, raillery? Fie! It were idle to aid such a man. You walk as one already dead when tonight, if you had the heart, you might remove the obstacle in your path and so win the woman you love."

"It were a needless labor. She no longer regards me with favor, and to pursue her further is to play the part of coward," Pausanias answered, as if having no heart in the matter.

"Well, go your way. Friendship is wasted on one so easily the dupe of those concerned in misleading him. Adieu! You are unworthy the fair being you relinquish. Led garlanded, like a patient brute to the sacrificial altar,

she will pine and die, while you live to grow old and fat on the recollection," and Amyntas turned away as if too angry to discuss the matter further.

"You do me wrong, oh friend, for I have heard within the hour that she no longer loves me and is content to wed the King."

"What subservient slave of Philip has gone out of his way to thus mislead you with so foul a lie?" Amyntas asked, facing the other as if surprised.

"The Prince, if you would know."

"Alexander?"

"Yes, Alexander. He went purposely to the palace of Attalus to plead my cause, but all in vain," Pausanias answered with a doleful sigh.

"Fie, Pausanias! Do you believe the silly story, made up to further his own designs?" Amyntas asked derisively.

"Yes, for he has every reason to favor me, being my friend and averse to the King's suit."

"Love knows no friendship, oh Pausanias. If the sun but come between the enamored swain and his adored it is accursed. Vain, weak man! You are ever the dupe of those you trust, for Alexander knows nothing of the proposed marriage of the King, and while seeming to plead for you sought only to advance his own suit. Cleopatra herself told me as much. Bah! I thought you a man of more discernment," Amyntas exclaimed scornfully.

"What avails Alexander's suit when the King presses? Nor can he be ignorant of his father's intentions, Amyn-

tas. Such a thing were too absurd to believe," Pausanias answered, surprised at what the other said.

"All the world knows it, Pausanias, save Alexander. Who would tell him, think you? Nay, hint at it even? It were an ill-requited confidence. You are doubly deceived, oh dreamer, and while you loiter, the scorn of men, she who reaches out to you in vain for succor will be carried off in the talons of the great vulture," Amyntas responded.

"Is that which you tell me true, Amyntas? Nay, swear it with uplifted arm before the Gods!" Pausanias cried, facing the Prince with flaming eyes.

"I swear that of all men, oh Pausanias, she loves you and no other," Amyntas answered, lifting his hand. "She yields in this to Attalus' ambitious dreams and the importunities of the King, a victim to the lust of those about her."

"I hold my life of no account losing her, oh friends, and if I have been deceived in this the King shall not snatch her from me to feed his brutish passions," Pausanias cried in a frenzy.

"Had you shown such spirit before, Philip would have looked elsewhere for a new mistress, and she be free to wed whom she pleased. Now, having proclaimed his purpose to make her his Queen, nothing except his death can save her from the unhappy fate."

"His death! How may such a thing be achieved? And if it fail?" Pausanias murmured, his face paling.

"It cannot fail, or if it should you may live to try again. To this I pledge you both my honor and my life," Amyntas answered confidently.

"Failing such attempt, I would kill myself in the King's presence," Pausanias answered, despair overshadowing his countenance.

"Yes, to receive his grateful thanks for taking yourself off so readily. Bah! the struggle with the King will not end thus. You will not die the death of a craven, but live a brave man to free the woman who loves and trusts you."

"I swear it Amyntas! Hear me, ye Gods!" Pausanias cried, at last convinced. "And as I am true to my oath, make me happy or destroy me utterly," he went on in a frenzy, lifting his clenched hands to heaven.

"Swear not so loudly, good friend, for here comes one who would scent danger to his masters in a mouse-trap," Mithrines exclaimed as Clitus approached the group with wary eyes.

"The King had best look to his hens when three such hawks hover about the roost," Clitus muttered as he came up, scanning the others with suspicious glance. "Your face, Pausanias, has not had so high a color these six months past. Were you confessing to the Gods but now, or taking some vain and foolish oath?"

"He was but forswearing women, good Clitus, vowing in the hardships of the camp to gain the honors he has so long given over to idle dreams," Amyntas answered, smiling amiably.

"I did not know the love-sick could be cured so easily, oh Prince. If one has but to swear then I will no longer shun the amorous hour, but mingling with the smitten youths claim some share in their lascivious pleasures," Clitus answered lightly, by no means satisfied.

"Being free, oh Clitus, you had best remain so, lest, catching the disease, distasteful purgatives may be necessary to cure you of the distemper; or, it growing upon you, more wives come to claim you than your allowance warrants," Amyntas answered, laughing.

"Those who need medicine do well to take it cheerfully, and if Pausanias' complaint has yielded to such treatment may the Gods be praised!" Clitus answered.

"If a case be hopeless, Clitus, and medicine fail, there yet remains the knife," Pausanias exclaimed with stolid face.

"What! May love, after all, be so desperate a thing that the surgeon must cut out the diseased part, as one would extract an arrow or lop off a shattered limb?" Clitus responded, attaching a doubtful meaning to the other's words.

"Yes, when passion so heats the blood that reason and decency give way to lustful indulgence, then bleeding is the only cure," Pausanias replied, looking Clitus in the face.

"In Pausanias' case, happily, a perfectly harmless medicine, albeit bitter to the taste, has done the business, and so he may once more look abroad like other men," Amyntas answered, putting his arm about Pausanias and leading him away, followed by Mithrines.

"If he be cured of his love for Cleopatra," Clitus muttered to himself as they departed, "then did the blade of that murderous pirate leave no scar on my fair cheek to disfigure me forever. There is some mischief afoot! What can it mean? Pausanias' look was not one to make a man sleep in his company, being at enmity with him.

With such companions too! No, Beard of Cyclops, there is death in the air or I am a lousy Spartan. Amyntas' show of frankness, wily man, was but a mask. But what is it? Comes the danger from the banquet as the warning read? What did the missive say?" he went on, pulling a scrap of paper from beneath his belt and eagerly perusing it. " 'Go armed to the banquet lest your master lose, untimely, the thing his friends prize so highly?' Eye of Cyclops! Nothing could be plainer, or if it be a joke, the weight of our swords will not tire us. You had best look to yourselves, oh trustful King, and still more trustful Prince, if you would keep your hearts beating in your breasts," and shaking his head in deep perplexity Clitus hastened away.

Dismissing his companions, Amyntas hurried toward his apartments, greatly agitated over what had taken place and the near consummation, as he believed, of his carefully laid plans. Little regarding what was occurring about him, he was stopped midway in his passage by a closely veiled chair that blocked his way. As he stood still, impatiently awaiting its movement, the curtain was partially drawn aside and a lady extending her hand beckoned him to approach. Recognizing the jewels of the Princess Cleopatra, he hastened to her side, greatly surprised at her presence in the palace. Still keeping her hand without the folds of the curtain, she exclaimed, as he approached, in a voice scarce audible:

"To you, noble Prince, is reserved the honor of first saluting your Queen, Cleopatra."

Astonished beyond measure at what he heard, he

pressed her hand to his lips in respectful homage, unable to speak, so great was his surprise.

"The King, impatient of delay and over-riding every obstacle as is his wont," she went on, letting Amyntas have some glimpse of her fair face, "the ceremony was performed according to his commands within half an hour of your departure."

"I give you loyal greeting and joy, oh Queen, and with it the fealty of a faithful subject who places his services and life at your command," Amyntas answered at last, overcoming his surprise.

"I expect as much, oh Prince; and now adieu, for I go to occupy the apartments the King has graciously assigned me beside his own," and smiling upon him she closed the curtains of the chair as she bade the attendant slaves go on.

Long Amyntas stood, watching with unmeaning eye the door by which she had disappeared, unable to determine whether this sudden marriage made for or against his plans. At last, seemingly satisfied that it would every way further his projects, he hastily entered the sumptuous apartments the King had that morning assigned him within the palace. Here, as he expected, he found the Lyncestian nobles. Hardy, resolute and resourceful, the swords of these dissolute brothers were ever at the command of the highest bidder. Corrupted by Mithrines' gold and entrapped by Amyntas, they now stood ready to do what the latter required, little regarding the future, confident in their united strength and purpose.

Seeing his followers impatiently awaiting him and not-

ing their expectant countenances, Amyntas, saluting them, cried with joyful speech:

"Good news, brave comrades. The throne of Philip topples with the added weight!"

"What mean you by that?" Lyncestes, sometimes called Alexander, answered.

"Why, what else than that the King, true to his word, like a foolish lover, has made Cleopatra his Queen."

"Already, say you?"

"Yes, within the hour."

"How know you this?"

"From Cleopatra, the Queen, herself, as she passed but now in a curtained chair," Amyntas answered in joyful tones.

"Is she within the palace?"

"Yes."

"By the Gods! She waits not on stately ceremony, this beautiful Queen; nor on Olympias' fast fading splendor. But I like her the better for her spirit; if the throne be yours, occupy it, and quickly," Lyncestes answered meaningly.

"Yes, lest waiting you be forgotten," Heromenes cried in response, eying Amyntas.

"Where is she lodged? I knew not that the palace afforded accommodation for two Queens?" Arrhabæus, the other brother, asked derisively.

"The King gives up half his quarters to her, like an indulgent husband."

"That is neighborly, and seems to look to some curtailment of the fair visitors who come and go between the setting and rising sun," Lyncestes cried, laughing.

"Yes, there is to be no more dallying with the frail beauties of Pella. The Queen is to sleep in Philip's bed, cook his food, open the door to coming guests and wait on them when they depart. Thus the good wives of the kings did in olden times, and so it is to be again," Amyntas answered with sardonic humor.

"Now, other men's wives and sweethearts open the King's door, and all the world has been topsy-turvy because of it," Heromenes, who was inclined to take a jovial view of life, answered. "But, good friend," he went on soberly, "have you nothing to tell us about tonight's banquet, more than we already know?"

"Naught save that you carry sharp weapons and drink sparingly, or not at all, lest the whole thing miscarry."

"I do not see that we have any worthy part to play save to fall on with sword and dagger when the signal is given. A cup, more or less, will but add zest to the work," Lyncestes replied, filling a goblet with wine and draining it at a draught. "Has every one his part as well in hand?" he went on, filling the cup afresh and beckoning his brothers to do the same.

"Yes, even the craven Pausanias, who left me but now to arm himself, cursing the long delay."

"And Alexander?"

"Why? What of him?" Amyntas asked surprised.

"Will he not stay away in resentment of the King's treatment of his mother? 'Twere a natural thing for him to do."

"No. Philip has commanded him to be present that nothing may be lacking to do honor to Oxyartes' mission. Because of that and Alexander having passed his word,

there can be no doubt of his presence," Amyntas answered confidently.

"The more fool he—and Attalus?" the other queried.

"He lends himself to the plot, thinking it goes no further than Alexander. To aid in this he promises to bring the King to the feast excited with wine."

"An easy office, an easy office," Heromenes answered dryly. "I would it had fallen to me."

"Afterwards, the King being wholly drunk, Attalus will spring the trap," Amyntas went on.

"To be killed by Alexander on the spot for his pains, or suffer some worse indignity," Heromenes answered, grinning.

"Quite likely," Amyntas answered carelessly. "Then the King being drunk and not knowing what he does, nor caring, will strike Alexander down at his feet."

"That will not be a thing so easy," Lyncestes interposed incredulously. "No, no, you expect too much, Amyntas. The Prince, disgusted and angry, will be more likely to hurry away, avoiding all strife with his father."

"Then the King being at our mercy, we may put him to death at our leisure. While those lying in wait will kill Alexander as he traverses the narrow path that he must to effect his escape from the disgraceful scene."

"But suppose he remains?"

"Then being unprepared, you will fall upon him and kill him where he stands," Amyntas answered decisively.

"But if we fail, oh Prince, as we are likely to do, what then? For Alexander, the best swordsman in the Kingdom, is not one to yield his life easily," Lyncestes answered soberly.

"It cannot fail," Amyntas replied, turning white at the other's serious manner. "Or if it does Alexander will still be in the wrong, having commenced the attack on Attalus. While we, seeking only to protect the King and his friends who are threatened, will escape with praise, and so live and prosper to try again. But adieu, good friends, till night, for I must hasten to Olympias to acquaint her with the marriage and Cleopatra's presence in the King's apartments," Amyntas cried, taking up his cloak and hat.

"'Tis not an agreeable errand, one would think?" Heromenes exclaimed dryly.

"On the contrary, it is one I would not lose nor share with you for half Mithrines' riches," Amyntas answered with a fiendish leer as he hurried away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EXILE OF OLYMPIAS.

Alexander and Roxana going the same day, in the middle of the afternoon, to pay a visit to the Queen, the Molossian soldiers who guarded the door refused them entrance, the officer explaining that his orders were to admit no one; but upon his being dispatched to the Queen to make known their presence, they were presently admitted. On gaining admission they were greatly surprised and shocked at the confusion and sorrow that reigned within. In the midst of the disordered room, the Queen arrayed as if for a journey, stood dejected, a melancholy picture of grief and anger. About her slaves were hurrying hither and thither, intent on the work in hand and paying little or no regard to the person or dignity of their sovereign. Grouped about the distraught Queen in mournful attitude, their faces stained with tears, her waiting women stood silent and motionless, overcome by some great sorrow.

Motioning the slaves and attendants to withdraw, the Queen held out her hands in welcome to Roxana, and when the latter would have knelt in humble obeisance, the Queen raised her up and tenderly embraced her. Then turning with abrupt movement to Alexander, she threw her arms about his neck, pressing her face with passionate love against his cheek. Thus she stood without speaking, her form shaken by the great sorrow that op-

pressed her. Respecting her grief Alexander remained silent, awaiting some explanation of her dejection and the confusion that reigned throughout her apartments; but when she neither stirred nor vouchsafed him a word, he at last exclaimed, his voice tremulous with the agitation that stirred his heart:

"Tell me, oh Queen, the cause of your anguish. What sorrow is it that consumes you and what means this confusion as if in preparation for some sudden journey?" Receiving no response to his appeal, he presently went on, striving the while to soothe her agitation with tender caresses: "We come, my mother, to pay you a visit of love and joy and find you stricken speechless by some great sorrow, so that overwhelmed at the sight we know not what to say or think."

"Let me share in your grief, oh Queen, if the love and honor I bear you is worthy of such great indulgence?" Roxana exclaimed, her eyes bedimmed with tears at sight of the grief of the strong Queen.

At last lifting up her head, Olympias answered with a weary smile:

"I had thought to hide my unhappiness, nor sadden those I love with the pitiable spectacle, for it is of such unwholesome nature that none can share it or in any way lessen its depth. Bear with my weakness, then, sweet children, now that you have come, for I shall not long mar your young lives with my melancholy presence," and taking their hands in hers she drew them tenderly to her side.

"What mean you, oh Queen, by such strange speech? and wherefore this great sorrow which we would fain

share if you will," Alexander exclaimed, fervently kissing his mother.

"I know I have your love, Alexander, and so am not like one utterly forsaken; and yours, sweet Princess," she added, seeing Roxana's look of distress. "But all save those who followed me from my own country when I came here a bride have fallen away, and I am as one lost. The King and those who fawn upon him and thrive upon his favor turn from me to a new and fairer face, and so I, who gave Macedonia an heir, am no longer thought fit to be the Queen," she answered, her face flushing at the humiliating confession.

"What strange delusion is this, oh mighty Queen, for no one thinks or dreams of act so dastardly! Our country can never have another Queen nor wish for one so long as you may live," Alexander answered, astonished at what she said.

"Your eyes are more partial than the King's, my son, else I should not now be driven from the court in disgrace."

"Driven from the court, oh Queen?" Alexander answered, anger overclouding his face. "What mean you? Who will do such a thing and wherefore?"

"It may not be concealed from you longer, my loving son, and it is to your honor that every one, either through love or fear, has kept it from you till now," she answered with a melancholy show of pride.

"What has been kept from me? Speak, mother, for I am tortured beyond endurance by your strange speech!" Alexander cried impatiently, loth to accept the import of her speech.

"Know then, my son, that the King, tiring of his Queen, has this day divorced her, and a new Queen has been brought to the palace and now shares his apartments," she answered, her eyes flaming with jealous rage and hate.

"No, no! Not as Queen, mother. Another wife maybe, nothing more; and what does that matter after all these years of sorrow and abandonment; for in such things, you know full well, the King cannot be controlled," Alexander answered, believing what she said, yet putting it away as one would a thing unutterable.

"No, not a simple wife nor common mistress to flaunt her finery in the face of the Queen for a day and then disappear to make way for another, as in the past, but a Queen, oh Prince, wearing the crown and having the title and honor, if there be longer honor in it," the unhappy woman answered with sad scorn.

"It cannot be, sweet Queen, that the King should be thus disregardful of your honor and the country's good name. Some one has given circulation to the cruel story to cause you pain and further estrange you from the King."

"No, it was the King himself who told me, and now it is confirmed by the base and crawling sycophant Amyntas. And though I stooped to plead with the monster of lust to spare me the deep disgrace, he answered only by bidding me choose between exile and retirement to Edessa," she answered, flushing at the recollection of the deep disgrace.

"What answer did you make, brave Queen, to speech so

insulting?" Alexander murmured in response, scarce able to speak, so great was his rage.

"What think you I said, chivalrous Prince, save that in exile I might breathe the sweet air of heaven, while here it would strangle me."

"By the Gods above, you shall neither be exiled, oh Queen, nor quit the court! Such disgrace would be intolerable, and if he force open war, war it shall be!" Alexander cried, unable to restrain his fury. "But who is the subservient creature he has chosen to fill the dishonored office?"

"Cleopatra, Attalus' niece!" she answered shortly, as if the name choked her.

"That cannot be, oh Queen," Alexander cried, surprised out of himself, "for within the hour she confessed—But no, no, the King cannot be thus tricked. Yesterday so great, he cannot have fallen to such level of folly and degradation today."

"His infatuation for the painted courtesan knows no bounds, and, poor fool, he thinks her crazed with a like passion for himself. Oh, he has not fallen, for there are no depths of wickedness or human desire that his lust has not long since sounded," she cried with bitter emphasis.

"I will go to him, oh Queen. His kindness has ever been greater than my worth, and he cannot now put such disgrace upon you, my mother."

"No, you shall not suffer the humiliation, Alexander, for no one can turn Philip from a fixed resolve; and upon this he is determined. 'Tis too late, my son, for the marriage is already consummated and the station of the woman fixed."

"He can still withdraw if he will, being all powerful," Alexander answered despairingly.

"He will not. Nor will I parley with the beast further, but flying hence, cleanse my throat of the air that his presence contaminates."

"Fly! What have you in mind, oh Queen? Is that the meaning of this dire confusion?" he cried, looking around at the dismantled rooms.

"Yes, my child. Would you have me stay to make humble obeisance to the bastard Queen? No! I will not await her summons, but hasten ere this new indignity be put upon me."

"Not now, oh Queen, for there is no such haste. They dare not thus humiliate you, or if you be determined I will go with you to await in exile a happier fortune," Alexander answered, caressing his mother.

"No, you must stay. You shall not thus play into the hands of our enemies. You must remain to guard your fortunes and honor. The Kingdom is yours as much as Philip's in right of succession. Away, he will be led to choose another in your place, and so the throne will be jeopardized or lost."

"He may so decree, but once the throne is vacant I will mount it though all Macedonia, misled by his creatures, should oppose me. Being King you shall be Queen as now, or if it is filled by another it shall be by my wife, and to your honor and greater dignity," and taking Roxana's hand, who stood surprised and dumfounded at what she heard, he went on: "Such a wife, oh Queen, I have chosen. Behold and greet her, I beseech you, as her grace and sweetness merit," and kneeling with Rox-

ana before the Queen, they caught hold of her garments in prayerful supplication.

"I could not have chosen one more worthy to be your Queen, nor one I so greatly love," the Queen answered, no way surprised, putting her arm about Roxana and lifting her up. "But the King will never consent to such union, and has so declared himself to me, for he already has word of your passion."

"I shall not ask his consent, for in this I will have my way, nor relinquish it were all the world offered me as the dower of another," he answered, kissing Roxana's hand.

"So I would have you. But if you would possess her for your Queen you must bide the hour, nor seek to hasten it lest the army, heated with expectancy of conquest, destroy you both ere it think a second time. Or if you be allowed to live it will be in exile, to your and her lasting unhappiness," the Queen answered solemnly.

"Nay, I would gladly relinquish the uncertain bauble if thereby we might live apart and free from the warring factions and intrigues of the court," Alexander answered, turning to Roxana with a loving smile.

"No, Iskander, you shall not hurry to your overthrow and death by such unworthy preference," Roxana interposed, clasping her arms about Alexander. "For your assurance would not be believed, and once you were disarmed and powerless, your enemies would lose no time in effecting your death."

"If you would live, oh Prince, you must meet cunning with greater cunning, guarding your life and hopes perpetually as from enemies intent upon your destruction.

Nor shall you break with the King, my son, grievous as is the wrong he has done me; for, tiring of this new passion, as of every other, he will at last be led to respect your rights, and so you will in the end come to the throne without strife."

"How can I obey you in this, oh Queen, when I no longer respect or cherish him? This wanton indignity chills my heart, and if I profess affection it will be without sincerity, and so must end in strife. No, I will go with you and in Epirus await the outcome that must surely attend this mesalliance."

"You shall not. I, your Queen, command it. Or, if that be not enough, your mother begs it, Alexander. Here you shall stay unless, indeed, some great indignity be put upon you, or your life be threatened. No! Do not destroy me utterly, Alexander. Do not make my despair greater by thus relinquishing your birthright to our enemies. Come, my son, my sweet Prince, tell me you will not, for otherwise I shall kill myself, so that my unhappy fortunes may no longer overcloud your future."

"I cannot promise, oh Queen. 'Twould be folly, for who can measure the insolence and oppression of those who now have possession of the King?"

"But you will at least await some overt act, some great excuse. Nay, you must, you shall, for I will by no means listen to your going at this time. There! embrace me, my son, and leave me. And you, sweet Princess, adieu till we meet beneath a less troubled sky. Or, if perchance, that should never be, cherish Alexander and his hopes with a brave and loving heart, as his mother has ever sought to do. To your wedlock I freely give my consent,

but await the propitious moment for its public avowal; until it conforms more nearly to the interests of the state, nor by undue haste alienate those who love and would serve you," the Queen exclaimed, her anxieties melting her heart at the dark prospect that overshadowed her son, and she whom he would make his Queen.

"This I promise you, oh Queen," Roxana answered, kissing her hand, "for I would rather die, as you have but now avowed for yourself, than cloud the glory of Iskander's life by any act of mine."

"By waiting, sweet Princess, you will assure both his happiness and your own. For, unless misled by some act of his, the army will surely assert his right to the throne when it becomes vacant. Once he is King and the time is ripe, he may make you Queen and so fulfill our every hope. There, go, my children, and you, my son, be wise and brave and kingly amid the dangers that threaten you," and kissing them amid her tears she would have thus dismissed them.

"You will not seek to leave the court, my mother, except with such honor as your friends may bestow and the escort and regal state that befits so great a Queen," Alexander answered, standing still.

"What matters it? Public leave-taking would be unseemly, and my Molossian sailors and guards will afford me every protection, for I am still their Queen, oh Prince, and shall be to the end, however it may be with others," she answered with some show of her former pride.

"But Roxana, my love, oh Queen. She shall not remain here, you being gone, to be made the plaything of Cleopatra."

"She will by no means molest her, Alexander, but rather seek to do her honor, hoping thereby to gain strength in her new position," the Queen answered, surprised at his vehemence.

"You know not what you say, oh Queen. Nor can you measure Cleopatra's enmity or its strange origin," Alexander cried, remembering the deep hatred she had evinced toward the Persian Princess. "No, her life is not secure an hour within the palace under the new Queen. Seek not, my mother, to know why, but rather help me to find some way to avoid the danger."

"Where can she go and still be safe if what you say be true?" the Queen answered, perplexed.

"Nor can I thus leave my father, Iskander. My going thus hurriedly would be thought so great an indignity by the King that he would, in his anger, drive the embassy from the palace," Roxana interposed, her fair brow clouded with anxiety.

"Why may she not go, and with you, oh Queen, to pay a visit of ceremony to the Princess Parcledes, and being there stay on indefinitely?" Alexander asked, his brow clearing at the thought.

"Can I do this, Iskander, when the King expects me to personate the Persian Queen at the banquet tonight?" Roxana asked, perplexed.

"A slave will do as well, sweet Princess, and no one be the wiser," Alexander exclaimed decisively. "Thus, as I propose, you may escape the danger that threatens and avoid injuring your father's cause."

"Have it as you will, Iskander, for I have no will to oppose to yours," Roxana answered, giving way.

"Hasten then to advise your father, sweet Princess, and return quickly that my departure may not be delayed," the Queen answered, dismissing them.

Taking their leave, Alexander and Roxana hastened toward the part of the fortress occupied by the Persian embassy, their minds too full of the thoughts that oppressed them to admit of speech. Meeting Lysimachus on the way, the latter stopped them, crying out:

"The King sends his greeting, oh Prince, and commands you a second time on no account to absent yourself from the banquet tonight."

"Wherefore does he repeat the summons, good Lysimachus, and in such peremptory language?" Alexander asked, surprised.

"I know not, oh master, only that he returned to the palace a little while ago, and with such black looks that everyone sought some excuse to hurry away as quickly as he could. Calling Antipater he gave directions that the guard at the entrance to the palace be doubled and no one be admitted after nightfall save those seen and approved by the Governor."

Surmising the cause of the King's ill temper, but by no means understanding the occasion of these precautions, Alexander would have gone on his way but Lysimachus, standing still, exclaimed in a loud voice:

"Nor was that all, oh Prince, but as if some danger threatened, the King further ordered that only old and trusted sentries be posted about the palace tonight, and that the watchword be changed at the last moment."

"What is it to be?" Alexander asked absently.

"I know not, for it may only be divulged to those

whose duty calls them without the fortress," Lysimachus answered, shame-faced at being left in ignorance.

"Already danger threatens you, Iskander," Roxana exclaimed with anxious voice when they were alone.

"No, fear not, sweet Princess. The King cannot so soon have turned against me. It is but some simple precaution attendant upon tonight's festivities, when many from the city will come to view the spectacle," Alexander answered with troubled brow.

"Wherefore his black looks at so joyous a time, if that be all? Oh look well to yourself, sweet Prince, nor trust any but those in whom you can confide your life."

"The walls have ears, sweet Princess, and it behooves all who are threatened to have a confident air, however ill at ease they may be," Clitus exclaimed at her elbow. "A closed mouth and a ready weapon are what the times call for, oh Prince, or I am a beggar at guessing," and lifting his arm Clitus hurried on as if his thoughts were wholly intent on the duties he had in hand.

"Clitus is ever fearful that some danger threatens me," Alexander exclaimed as if to reassure Roxana. "I will go in person to learn the meaning of these precautions. Good master," he went on, calling to Lysimachus, "go to the King and say I crave audience with him if it be his pleasure."

"I dare not, oh Prince. Choose some other messenger, I pray you, for he has given orders that only Attalus and his niece are to be admitted to his presence."

"It is as I feared, Iskander. Only your enemies are allowed the King's ear. Go arm yourself, and by no means attend the banquet tonight, despite the King's

order. Such happenings in Susa ever foretell some dreadful tragedy to those out of favor with the great King."

"No, I will not let my enemies say I feared to show myself when danger threatened, if it be true that some plot is brewing in which I am concerned," Alexander answered, his eyes blazing defiantly.

"Then go armed, and hide a coat of steel beneath your cloak, if you will incur the needless danger."

"No, sweet Princess. If I am doomed, such device, the fruit of apprehension, will only hasten its coming. The precautions taken are not the King's, who knows not what fear is, but Attalus', who suspects others of the treachery he, himself, ever practices. No, sweet love, I will go to the banquet, and with no other arms than those worn about the court," Alexander answered decisively.

"Then you are doomed to death, Iskander, for sure I am some plot is formed to bring about your destruction," she answered with a woman's cunning instinct.

"No, sweet love, for I shall have Clitus and other good friends about me. Let us not fear the conflict if it must come, but rather court it that the murky atmosphere may the sooner clear. It is amidst such dangers that our princes live, and they may not escape them if they would, my sweet."

"I would persuade you if I could, but being weak must yield to your stronger will; but remember, Iskander, that you treasure another's heart that will no longer beat when yours is still."

To this Alexander made no other response than to kiss Roxana's hand as they hurried forward. Reaching her

apartments they found the Princess Sylvia, Philip's daughter by his Dacian wife, awaiting Roxana's return. Seeing her as they approached, Alexander asked in surprise:

"What errand brings her here, think you, Roxana?"

"She often visits me thus, being most kind in her attentions. But now I suspect she comes with reference to the evening festivities, for the Princess, thinking the Persian dress more resplendent than that of her own country, wishes to appear thus disguised and so comes, I doubt not, to seek my aid."

"Will you do what she asks?" Alexander inquired, striving to detect some hidden purpose in the exchange which Sylvia desired to make.

"Yes, and indeed beg her to appear in my place as the Persian Queen if she be so inclined. Then if the imposition be discovered the King cannot be angry with his daughter for the deception," Roxana answered, hurrying forward.

The Princess Sylvia, on the request being preferred of her, joyfully acceded to the other's wishes, and the matter being quickly arranged, Roxana hastened to her father to gain his permission to visit the Princess Parcledes. In this she had no great difficulty, for Oxyartes, the brave and single-minded soldier that he was, believed his daughter to be the wisest and best woman in the world, and so believing, allowed her to do, in all things, exactly as she wished. Having gained his permission and everything pertaining to the visit being happily arranged, Alexander and Roxana returned to the Queen, whom they found impatiently awaiting their coming. Welcoming

them with a sad smile, she at once gave orders for her departure. Nor was this long delayed, the slaves and attendants who were to accompany her being already domiciled on board the great galley, which lay moored at the private entrance to the fortress. This noble vessel, the Queen's own, was manned throughout by her Molossian countrymen, for neither now nor in the past would she trust any others. Midway of the vessel a lofty mast carried a wide spreading sail of crimson cloth in imitation of the Egyptian fashion, and in supplement to this a hundred oarsmen helped to propel the gallant ship. At either end of the galley, platforms served the purposes of the guard or afforded vantage ground in case of attack or defense. Beneath that, in the rear, a spacious saloon was prepared for the Queen and smaller rooms for her attendants. In the prow similar space served for the soldiers and officers who manned the galley. Such was the noble vessel on which the brave Queen set out on her long voyage through the Ægean and Ionian seas on her way to Epirus, the country of her birth. Going on board, accompanied by Alexander and Roxana, the resolute Queen assuming command of the ship, gave instant orders to weigh anchor.

"Say to the oarsmen," she cried, calling the captain to her side, as the galley got under way, "that they shall have triple pay and allowances of wine if tomorrow's dawn finds the ship in the open waters of the Gulf."

Thus this great and most unhappy Queen took her departure from the capital of Macedonia, where her two children were born and where she had passed so many distressful years of wedded life. Gaining the open river,

the swift galley shot forward in its course to the south with ever-increasing speed. Standing on the raised platform of the ship the Queen and her companions watched with aching hearts and tear-dimmed eyes the fast receding fortress and adjacent city. Approaching the hut of Parcledes, the Queen could not be prevailed upon to disembark, but announced her purpose to proceed without delay. Embracing Roxana with tender love, she turned to Alexander and clasped him in her arms, her countenance agitated by the grief she sought in vain to control. At last, releasing him, she led him to the side of the ship, exclaiming:

"Be steadfast and true, my Prince, and await with such patience as you can the coming of happier days." Clasping him again in her arms and kissing him with fervent love, she turned and hurriedly entered her room.

Unable to speak, Alexander and Roxana went on board the Prince's barge, which had followed after with Ossa and the guard and attendants of the Princess. With their departure, the galley of the Queen responding to the command of the captain, quickly resumed its rapid flight, and though Alexander and Roxana watched with tearful eyes and throbbing hearts until the vessel was lost to view, the Queen came not from her retirement. A prey to her despairing sorrow she remained hidden within the privacy of her room and emerged not again until the staunch ship buffeted the troubled waters of the Ægean Sea.

When, at last, the galley had passed from view, Alexander brought his barge to the shore, and taking Roxana's hand led her in sorrow to the door of Parcledes' hut. Great was the surprise and pleasure of the Princess at

their coming, but greater still her astonishment to learn of the flight of the Queen and the surprising happenings at the court of Philip, for this unhappy Princess lived apart and in such lonely retirement that she heard little or nothing of the great world without; treasuring the memory of her husband and full of the care of her daughter, she gave little or no thought to aught else. Welcoming Roxana as if she were a favored child, and assuring her of the happiness her coming gave, she shortly hastened away to make suitable provision for the Princess' comfort.

Left alone, Alexander and Roxana clasped their arms about each other in fervent love, overcome by the sad happenings of the day. Scarce speaking, so full were their hearts, the afternoon waned and Alexander still stayed on, soothed and comforted by Roxana's presence. Nor would he have gone when the sun at last disappeared behind the distant mountains, had not Roxana put her arm about him and led him to the river bank, where his barge lay moored. There, taking sad leave of her and promising to return on the morrow, Alexander went aboard and the sailors plying their oars with hearty zeal, the vessel shot into the stream and so quickly regained the city.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HISTORICAL BANQUET OF PHILIP.

In conformity with the simple habits of his life, and that the feast might not be unduly delayed nor needlessly cut short, Philip ordered the setting of the banquet for an early hour. So that the day had scarcely closed ere the guests gathered with military promptness in the great hall of audience off the King's private room. While they thus stood about discussing in low voices and with many a covert laugh the surprising events of the day Philip abruptly entered, followed by the new favorite Attalus. Of commanding presence and kingly mien, Philip looked as he strode forth what he truly was, the foremost man of all the world. His massive and well-shaped head covered with curly black hair was surmounted by a golden crown heavily incrusted with resplendent jewels. About his strong arms and neck he wore, according to the fashion of the age, numerous bands of gold heavily incrusted with jewels. A long cloak of Tyrian purple, trimmed with fur, partially hid the rich coat of embroidered gold that he wore beneath.

Sweeping the room with quick glance and noting Alexander's absence, a deep frown overspread his bronzed and rugged features; but this presently giving place to a smile of welcome, he greeted those assembled with kingly courtesy. Going directly to each guest standing expectant in a semi-circle about the great room, he said some

word of friendship or greeting to each and every one. Then, preceded by the officers of the court, and attended by the royal pages, the King took his way without loss of time to the banqueting hall. After him and more like captives than aught else, came the Persian Ambassadors, their brilliant raiment blazing with resplendent jewels. Following them in order of their rank came the Macedonian nobles and inferior guests of the evening.

As the procession emerged upon the wide balcony of the spacious court, musicians, in picturesque costumes, sounding their instruments, preceded the stately line of march. First in order came a group of handsome youths, blowing long and slender horns of silver, costumed in sleeveless tunics of clinging white cloth, trimmed with red and gold. Their legs were bare to the knees while sandals covered their feet, bound about the ankles with strands of gold. Following them came youths clad in short coats of blue, trimmed with Grecian bands of white, playing fifes adorned with gold. Surmounting their heads high pointed hats of pure white, adorned with waving plumes, strangely contrasted with the wreaths of green that encircled the heads of those preceding them. Following these came youths, ten in number, playing flutes with silver mountings. They were costumed in short tunics of pale green cloth, trimmed with bands of gold about the skirt and waist and adorned with girdles of pure silver. Their long and luxuriant hair, flowing loose about their graceful heads, was adorned with delicate wreaths of myrtle.

Preceding the stately procession, the musicians traversed the embowered galleries, entering at last by a path

hidden by shrubs, the oblong space set apart for the banquet in the center of the great court. In adornment of this, waving palms and tropical plants and flowers of brilliant hue gave to the enclosure an air of seclusion truly sylvan. At one side a silken canopy, surmounted by a golden crown, was raised above the crimson divan, for the King. Back of this the royal pages, having the privilege of dining with the monarch, were provided a place partially hidden by the luxuriant foliage. About the edge of the open space, half concealed by the wealth of shrubs and brilliant flowers, silver lamps filled with perfumed oil, and huge bronze pots containing Pierian pitch cast a mellow light over the attractive scene. To give greater effect to the dazzling picture the lofty balconies of the palace were left in darkness, except as the soft light of the moon and flaming torches placed far apart, served in some measure to illuminate the gloomy enclosure. Thus those who looked down could see without being seen, except imperfectly, like phantoms peering forth, or shadows flitting hither and thither.

Long ere the feast was called or darkness had set in, the balconies were filled with the expectant guests, promenading back and forth awaiting the great event. Of these some were without disguise of any kind, while others wore masks or were dressed in such curious and fantastic garb as their ingenuity suggested. Moving uneasily back and forth or standing still, striving to make out the identity of those who passed, the semi-twilight, distorting the silent figures, gave to the scene a weird and barbaric aspect, menacing rather than enlivening. In the midst of the revelers a group of ladies, dressed in the brilliant cos-

tumes of the Persian court, slowly promenaded the crowded balconies. In their midst and wearing a resplendent tiara, the Persian Queen received the adoration and homage of those about her. Keeping ever near her, as if curious, a woman, old and crippled, disguised as a priestess of Dodona, followed, telling the fortunes of those who cared to listen. To add a tinge of levity to the scene, mountebanks and clowns with distorted features, or the faces of hideous animals, rushed here and there with subdued cries, or perched themselves on conspicuous places of vantage.

When some time had passed and the air of curiosity had given place to one of impatience, the music of trumpet, flute and fife, sounding clear and musical from the court below, announced the coming of the revelers. In honor, beside the King, as the procession emerged into the open space, Attalus walked. Not with the haughty and assured brow that he usually wore, but as if the dignity were unsought and of doubtful expediency. Delayed by his journey, Alexander followed behind, alone, with absent manner and melancholy visage. A short crimson cloak enveloped his shoulders and partly hid the resplendent coat of Sicilian cloth embroidered in gold that he wore beneath. On his head he wore the Kausia, surmounted by the waving white ostrich feathers which in the years to follow were to become the oriflamme of his devoted soldiers. As he came slowly on those who looked with friendly eyes sighed when they saw his troubled face, knowing full well the anguish that filled his heart.

As the King reclined upon the royal divan, placed

somewhat above the others, it was seen by those who watched that his face was already deeply flushed with wine. Motioning Attalus to occupy the couch at his left, the Persian Ambassadors were shown with stately ceremony to those reserved for them upon his right. Beyond them, in an obscure place, half concealed by overhanging palms, the scholar and teacher Aristotle reclined amid the gallants of the court. Abstracted in manner, he seemed not to know where he was, his pale face and luminous eyes turned upward toward the star-lit sky, appeared as if seeking the solution of some weighty problem. Advancing to the center of the open space, Alexander gravely saluted the King and afterwards his old instructors, Lysimachus and the princely Leonidas. But Aristotle, inattentive, absorbed in thought, neither saw nor heeded his kindly greeting. Glancing about him, the sorrowing Prince saw few of his friends, and knowing the slight could not have occurred by chance, an angry frown crimsoned his fair face. Standing irresolute for a moment, Clitus, making deep obeisance, conducted him to a couch opposite the King, himself and the faithful Eumenes occupying those on either side.

All being now placed, silver basins filled with perfumed water were presented to the guests, in which to lave their hands; these being succeeded by napkins of snow white linen. The guests having thus cleansed their hands, the usual sacrifice was offered, followed by libations of wine. This being completed and the feast being next in order, the hungry guests dipped into the dishes before them without ceremony or word of any kind. Saying some graceful thing to the Persian nobles and others

about him, the King barely touched the food before him, but impatiently motioned the cup-bearer to fill his empty goblet. This being the signal, soon the cups of all were filled with the golden wine, whereupon each guest rose to his feet and inclining his head in graceful obeisance to the King emptied his goblet at a draught. Everyone being in a mood to eat, and the ceremony simple in the extreme, the courses of the banquet were served in quick succession. These were accompanied with the soft music of the lyre and lute or the more strident tones of the inspiring harp. Presently the appetites of the guests being somewhat appeased, their spirits were enlivened by the wanton performances of half-nude dancing girls, to the sound of tambourine and castanet. These tiring, strolling players with faces stained with lees or covered with masks, chanted their comic parts or recited their melancholy lays. Giving way in their turn, mountebanks and tumblers went through their allotted parts amidst the applause or derisive cries of the half-drunken revelers. As the evening advanced and the King and those about him became enlivened by the heavy wine, laughter and loud talk succeeded the sober demeanor that characterized the earlier stages of the feast. Philip, who seemed not in good temper, was not sparing in what he said, but spurred everyone to such lively exhibition of temper or jollity as his varying moods suggested.

"Good friends, why can not men whatever be their nationality dwell together in peace and amity as do these savage dogs?" he at last cried, smiling upon the Persian nobles as he threw morsels of meat to the Molossian hounds that stood watching him expectantly.

"Greed or fear alone stand in the way, oh King," Oxyartes answered amiably, thinking of the threatening war between Persia and Macedonia.

"A good reason and all in favor of the dogs," Clitus, whom the events of the day had grieved and angered, responded in a loud voice. "Yet I hate them except when they tear down the antlered buck or bait the savage boar. At other times they have too much the cringing habits of men."

"You slander the brutes, Clitus. Nothing could be more noble than the bearing and faces of these animals," the King responded, fondling the hound nearest him.

"A crust ennobles and tames them, oh King, as it does the hangers-on about the courts of kings," Clitus answered in no pleasant voice, looking around upon the followers of Attalus.

"We could forgive your hatred of dogs, Clitus, if your heart softened more to the seductive wiles of women," the King answered good naturedly.

"I do not know, oh King, never having been much tempted," Clitus answered foolishly.

"Nor will you be, good friend, for women love not inattentive eyes," the King answered, scanning the face of the old soldier with a kindly smile. "Your scarred features they would gladly overlook, if you were but more appreciative of their beauty."

"My scars should recommend me to their favor, oh King, for I got them every one in your glorious service."

"It were a good recommendation, Clitus, if you did not lack soft speech and the sensibility of love. It is a fatal fault. Men like horses and dogs because of companion-

ship, but love and adore women because they have to and so tell them," the King answered, filling his cup and holding it up as if toasting the absent Cleopatra. "How comes it, oh Lysimachus," he went on presently, his mood changing, as he observed the poor pedagogue still intent upon filling his stomach, "that while no one in the kingdom is so ready as you with his fingers when the pot is brought, yet you have scarce meat enough on your bones to feed a hawk."

"It is because of the dual office he fills, oh King," Attalus interposed, "for his brain absorbs what goes to nourish the bodies of other men. And in his case, being a teacher," he went on with a sneer, "he must think for both himself and his callow pupil."

"His callow pupil, vain man!" Clitus cried in a rage, "lacks not ability to think for himself nor strength to punish those who deride him, as you will find out in due time."

"Nor is that the only burden the pedant bears," Amyntas interposed derisively, disregarding Clitus' speech, "for beneath his ill-fitting jacket and shrunken form another man than he must be nourished."

"Who may that be, noble Prince?" the King cried in response, highly entertained at the turn the speech had taken.

"Who think ye, oh King, but Phœnix, the precursor of Achilles," Amyntas answered with a laugh.

"Does the simpleton still cherish that delusion?" the King asked in an angry voice, his heart filled with jealousy of Alexander. "If what he avers be true, then I, the father of Achilles, must needs already be put aside or

dwell among the dead and so be of no further use to men."

"So it would seem from his boastings and the encouragement it receives," Amyntas answered with heightened voice. "See, oh King, he heeds us not; but hungry still, dips to the very bottom of the steaming dish to pick some tender morsel thence to glut his ravenous appetite."

"Nor is his body less busy than his hands, but works back and forth like the terrible constrictor, that he may the sooner empty his throat for what is to follow," Attalus cried, glancing at Alexander, amid the laughter of those about him.

"'Tis said he accustoms his fingers to boiling water that he may reach deep and long into the steaming dishes while others wait in idleness," Amyntas responded ironically.

"Who can doubt it unless the dirt on his hands prove the contrary. For true it is that his fingers are ever first to find the succulent piece in every dish, leaving others the less savory parts for their share," Attalus cried in scornful mirth.

"It is better for the country that he have his fingers deep in the stew, than in the King's treasury, as is truly said of those who scoff at him," Alexander cried, arousing himself and referring to Attalus' well-known greed. "Nor is it seemly in nobles so exalted to load an honest and inferior man with ridicule for fools to laugh at," he concluded raising his head aloft and flashing a look of contempt on those who ridiculed the harmless old man.

"No, not if the deserving man has perchance discovered some strong resemblance in an exalted person to the

chivalrous Achilles," Attalus answered in his biting way. "Nay, I crave pardon, illustrious Prince, if I have offended. But absurd things sometimes come tripping into our thoughts unbidden, and so it is with regard to Lysimachus and his silly delusion."

"While you talk your cups are empty and the wine skins sweat or overflow on the thirsty floor," the King cried, holding out his cup to be filled. "Drink, all of you and be merry while Antipater, lost to every virtue, keeps guard about the brimming horn. Come, Amyntas, master of the feast, let not the dancing girls pine longer in obscurity. Bring them forth again that we may view their generous limbs and revel in their amorous glances ere our eyes, dulled with wine, can no longer discern the lean from the fat," and placing his drinking cup of solid gold, in shape and size like a bull's horn, to his lips, the King emptied it at a draught.

Amyntas thus instructed beckoned the half-clad dancers to approach near to the King that his fading senses might feel their warmth and enlivening presence. The musicians, too, responding with energy to their office, the blare of the brazen trumpet and the softer strains of pipe and flute presently created such noise and confusion that speech of every kind was for the moment silenced. Motioning them after a while to cease, the King turned to Oxyartes and thinking to say some pleasant word, exclaimed:

"You find our fare meager, noble Prince, but if our food be heavy the wine is also strong, and therein we make some amends to our guests. In drinking, though, as in every agreeable vice, we are but novices beside your noble race."

"It would be an unpardonable offense, oh King, to allow you to deny your greater excellence in that as in every other thing worthy the regard of men," Oxyartes answered, rising and bowing to the King.

"Tut, tut! We are but just born and have everything to learn from the children of the great King. And, as in other things, and therein is the pity, he shames his royal brother in the number and glory of his wives. But 'tis a thing that may be made good," the King went on with maudlin humor, "and so I may hope to remedy it with age and greater opportunity."

"It is a privilege much commended in Persia, oh King, and worthy of being followed elsewhere by the enlightened rulers of the world," Mithrines interposed with malicious humor.

"It is a custom more fit for animals than men," hiccoughed Lysimachus, overcome with drink. "Kings should be content with one wife. All others—" But some one pulling him back on his couch ere he could complete the sentence, the old man presently fell forward in a drunken stupor.

The King not hearing or not wishing to hear went on:

"Yes, noble Mithrines, the custom commends itself and I shall not fail to set a good example in respect of it to my successor," and lifting his cup he drained it to the bottom.

"The great King will feel honored and flattered by your commendation," Mithrines cried in a loud voice, emptying his goblet in response.

"The custom is as old as the monarchy in Macedonia, and the gracious consort our mighty King has this day

taken to himself evinces its present strength and wisdom," Amyntas interposed, glancing scornfully at Alexander, who seemed neither to notice nor hear what was going on about him.

The King, worn with the events of the day and conscious of his growing intoxication, now raised himself and holding his drinking cup aloft cried in a thick voice:

"I propose to you exalted Persians and you my brave comrades and faithful subjects the happiness and long life of her exalted majesty, the beautiful and ever gracious Queen, Cleopatra."

Responding with one accord the guests rose to their feet, the friends of Cleopatra emptying their cups amid mutual congratulations and clamorous cries. When some quiet was at last restored Attalus sitting bolt upright on his couch cried in a loud voice so that those who watched from the gallery could plainly hear:

"In acclaiming Her Majesty the august Queen, Cleopatra, oh King, the nation hope and believe that through her we may at last be blessed with a legitimate heir to the throne of Macedonia," and holding out his goblet to be filled he gazed across at Alexander with a look of undisguised hatred.

Attalus' bitter and insulting speech was followed for a moment by the silence of death. Then Alexander, his wine untouched, springing to his feet, cried in a voice of thunder:

"Do you call me a bastard, you cringing dog!" and lifting his goblet with the words, he hurled it full in Attalus' face. "Thus I answer all who traduce my mother, the Queen, or seek to cast dishonor on her son," and

drawing his sword he would have killed Attalus on the spot. But the King rising to his feet, his face distorted with passion and drink, cried out in the rude dialect of the Macedonian shepherds:

"Is it thus, presumptuous Prince, that you defy your King and insult by word and deed those he honors?" and drawing his sword he started to strike Alexander down. But tripping on the lion skin that covered the steps of the raised platform, he fell to the floor in a faint, weakened by his wounds and intoxication.

As the King advanced Alexander drew back, not wishing to appear to contend with him no matter what his purpose. But ere he could sheath his weapon Amyntas and those about him raised the fateful cry "Treason, Treason," and drawing their swords, rushed forward in a body to attack the Prince. With the cry and by preconcerted movement the lights about the open place were extinguished, leaving the court in darkness save as the moon and the torches from above served in some measure to distinguish the movements of those present. Seeing the King fall Alexander hurried forward to lift him up, and doing so, saw Pausanias advancing upon the stricken monarch with upraised dagger. Observing this and noting the extinguishment of the lights, it flashed upon him that what was transpiring was not the result of chance, but the culmination of a plot to destroy both the King and himself. Springing forward and raising aloft his sword, he gave utterance to the well-known cry:

"For the King! For the King!"

Clitus observing the concerted movement and also divining the conspiracy, cried out hastily:

"A plot! A plot!" rushing forward at the same time with Eumenes and Leonidas to the Prince's aid.

Well it was Alexander's sword was in his hand, else he had been killed ere he could have released it from the scabbard. Parrying the thrusts of his enemies as he advanced, he struck Pausanias down with the flat of his sword as the latter came forward, half creeping, half-running with uplifted dagger. Alexander's companions pushing their way to his side, now formed a circle of flaring swords about the stricken King. But Amyntas and his party, nothing daunted, continued to attack them on every side, crying the while "Treason! treason! To the King's rescue!"

Thus in a moment the fierce cries of angry combatants and the resounding clash of steel on steel took the place of the hitherto peaceful revelry. Standing undaunted beside the unconscious King the weapons of Alexander and his friends flashed back and forth in the dim light as they struck down or warded off the swords of those who opposed them. In this way the strife continued amid fierce cries and imprecations, until Antipater, hearing the uproar, hastily collecting a body of soldiers, rushed in and put an end to the struggle.

Thus, through the accident to the King, a thing all unforseen, the carefully planned conspiracy of Amyntas and his friends came to naught.

While Antipater busied himself removing the King, and as if to add greater stress to the turmoil, the sharp agonizing cry of a woman rang out on the gloomy court. Scarce had it ceased when a slave emerging from the palace with a flaming torch, disclosed the terror-stricken

women of the Persian embassy grouped about the prostrate form of one of their number. Looking up and fearing some harm to the Princess Sylvia, he knew not why, Alexander hurriedly left his companions and mounting the stairs ran to the scene of commotion. Reaching the spot he was terror-stricken to discover the prostrate form of her who personated the Persian Queen, lying motionless on the wide balcony. Kneeling down with a sob of anguish in his throat, knowing full well what he would find, he started back with a cry of horror to discover the gentle and inoffensive Princess already dead. Tearing apart, in a frenzy, the garments that covered her breast, a deep wound above the heart showed all too clearly how she had met her fate. Turning in rage and grief to those who stood looking on with wonder and affright, he cried in a loud voice:

"Who has done this foul murder? Why do you not answer? Speak! Point out the cruel fiend!" he went on, scanning the faces of those about him, as no one stirred.

At last, one of the attendants regaining her voice, answered with a shudder:

"We do not know, oh Prince; but as we stood intently watching the strife below an old woman pushed her way forward, and reaching the side of the poor Princess, plunged a dagger in her bosom."

"Where is she? Bring her before me," Alexander cried, looking about him in dismay.

"We know not whence she fled, oh Prince, for immediately the blow was struck she turned and disappeared in the darkness, no one thinking to follow or hinder her."

Disappointed at the escape of the assassin but knowing full well from whence the blow had come, Alexander bent over and kissed Sylvia's cold cheek, murmuring amid the sobs that filled his throat: "Alas, poor stricken child, in your thoughtless gayety you have met the cruel death designed for another as innocent as you of harm to any one."

Long he continued to gaze upon the face of his murdered sister, the events of the day passing in sad review before his dimmed eyes. But at last lifting the body tenderly in his arms he placed it upon the couch which slaves had hurriedly brought. Covering it with his crimson cloak he walked beside the dead Princess as the attendants bore the body towards her apartments. Traversing the long galleries of the fortress their progress was stayed by the Queen as she sought with her attendants to pass in an opposite direction, toward the rooms of the King. Seeing Alexander approach with the slaves bearing the dead body, the Queen, affrighted and confused at the unexpected meeting, sought to pass on without stopping. But Alexander motioning the attendants to put down their burden approached Cleopatra, exclaiming in a voice broken by emotion:

"Stay your steps, in passing, to breathe a prayer beside the body of her who lies yonder stricken to death."

"Are you serious, good Prince, or is it some masquerading pleasantry of the banquet?" she answered, striving to smile.

" 'Tis no pleasantry, for death is most serious and she is dead."

"I knew not before that such a thing had happened.

'Twill greatly shock the King, already ill," she replied, striving to appear calm. "Was it some incident of the festival, growing out of the strife, or did it come in the natural sequence of life?"

"She was murdered, and causelessly, by some monster in the guise of woman, void of heart or sensibility," he cried, keeping his gaze fixed upon the agitated face of the Queen.

"'Tis impossible such a crime could have been committed here amid the vast throng. 'Twas her own act. It must have been," she answered resolutely.

"No, those with her saw the blow and noted the flight of the assassin," he answered sternly.

"The assassin!" she exclaimed with a shudder. "What was she like?"

"The same as you in height," he responded, dwelling on the words. "But being masked and otherwise disguised, they could make out nothing further. But come nearer, that you may look upon the face of the poor child and pay her the tribute of a sigh," and grasping her by the arm he dragged her to the side of the bier.

"No, no," she cried, affrighted, holding back. "Not now, not now. Tomorrow will do as well. Now I am called to the side of the King, who may be dying," she went on, striving to free herself.

"Yes, now and here, for tomorrow will not do. Behold the grievous spectacle," and with the words he threw back the cloak, disclosing the face of the dead Princess. "See!" he went on in a low voice, "'twas not Roxana the assassin struck, as she thought, but Sylvia, the King's child."

Gasping in terror at his words her eyes unconsciously sought the white face of the murdered woman. Stricken to the heart and trembling in every limb Cleopatra turned and would have fled; but her strength failing, she threw out her hands as if to put away the horrid spectacle, and murmuring a cry fell prostrate at Alexander's feet. Calling to her attendants to come to her aid, Alexander, bidding the slaves take up the dead body, proceeded without further happening to the apartments of the stricken Princess.

Thus terminated the memorable banquet of Philip of which historians have never failed to make some note in their account of this great monarch. For it was here, it seemed, that the first breach between Philip and Alexander occurred.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LEES OF THE WINE.

Forming the soldiers about the prostrate monarch Antipater placed him upon a couch and so bore him to his chamber, the conspirators following with drawn swords as if fearful the King should be further attacked. Placing the King upon his bed, restoratives were applied, followed by a steaming bath. Meanwhile the conspirators, forming a circle about the prostrate King, impatiently awaited his recovery. Nor had they long to wait, for the sturdy monarch, quickly overcoming his weakness, lay at his ease, listening to what was said by those who surrounded his couch. At last, raising himself and scanning the faces of those about him, he motioned Attalus to approach.

"What is this they babble about an attempt on my life while I, borne down by wounds, lay stunned by my fall?" the King asked in a weak voice, passing his hand over his eyes as if they were still clouded with the fumes of wine.

"Whatever you may have heard, oh King, it cannot have exaggerated the peril you were in," Attalus replied in a constrained voice.

"What peril, and from whence, for I saw nothing? Or if there was some feeling while we feasted it was not out of the ordinary among the turbulent and jealous Princes."

"In this case, oh King, weapons were drawn and the cry of treason raised as your friends rushed in to save you from death."

"To save me from death! Was it as serious as that, Attalus? Who were the friends to whom I am indebted for the service?" the King responded, somewhat sharply, as if loth to believe what the other said.

"There were many, oh King, but some, more ready than the others, rushed forward, in peril of their lives, so deadly was the conflict about your prostrate body."

"Who were they, Attalus? I thought every one my friend, for even those most aggrieved by the state have received nothing but kindness at my hands," the King answered in a troubled voice, passing his hand wearily across his brow.

"Your forbearance has been as generous as it has been unexampled in the annals of Kings. In return the Princes favored by you have now repaid your kindness at the risk of their lives."

"If what you say be true, why do you not name them? Surely it is not a thing to be ashamed of. Come to the point, Attalus, and that quickly," the King exclaimed, with heightened voice.

"If I do not name them, oh King, it is because I am loth to grieve you by distinguishing between your friends and enemies where all have been trusted," he answered evading the King's command.

"Quick! their names, Attalus, ere I force you at the point of my sword," the King cried in a frenzy, reaching for his weapon, which lay on a chair beside his couch.

At this Attalus, as if alarmed at the other's threat, replied:

"Know then, oh King, if you compel me to do that which I would fain avoid, they were Amyntas, Pausanias and the Lincestian Princes, all of kingly line. Coming to their aid many others fought not less bravely by their side."

"All you have named owe me the favor of their lives, for each has some claim to the throne, and so his life is forfeit to me," the King responded, reflecting on what the other said. "These you name fought for their King; who, then, were the conspirators? Alexander, my son, did he stand idly looking on, hoping thus to find an opening to the throne? And Clitus, too, so strong of arm, did he not lift his hand?" the King asked, scarce above a whisper.

"Yes, those you name were active with their swords, but not as I had thought, in defense of their King," Attalus answered with downcast head, as if the secret thus torn from him grieved him to the heart.

"The Gods defend us! Were they, too, among the conspirators? Alexander, my son, whom I have loved and treasured! And Clitus, whom I have ever preferred above others!" the King exclaimed, bowing his head in shame.

"Yes, oh King, they led the attack, for no sooner had you fallen and the lights being extinguished as they planned than, drawing their weapons, they would have killed you where you lay had not your friends beat them off. Nor is that all, oh sorrowing King," Attalus went on as if bowed down with grief; "for in the turmoil, so it appears, your daughter, the sweet Princess Sylvia, was most cruelly murdered, her assailant mistaking her for the Queen."

"Sylvia, my little Sylvia murdered, say you!" the King cried in surprise and anguish, falling back on his couch with staring eyes.

"Yes, oh King, and most cruelly, as she looked on in fancied security from the heights above." Attalus answered sorrowfully.

"Ye Gods! What offense had the poor child committed that she should have been thus punished?" the King murmured, covering his face with his trembling hands.

"No offense, oh King, save that in innocent mirth she personated the Persian Queen among those who filled the balconies and so was mistaken for Cleopatra," Attalus answered.

"But the Princess Roxana was to have personated the Persian Queen, and so told me," the sorrowing King answered, bewildered.

"So it was to have been, but going this afternoon to pay a visit to the Princess Parcledes it was whispered about the palace that the Queen was to take her place in the innocent frolic. Thus Sylvia has fallen a victim in place of the Queen," Amyntas answered with confident assurance.

"By all the Gods of high Olympus such murderous intent is past the belief of man," the King exclaimed, arousing himself. "I will not leave one of the assassins alive. No, none shall escape me, however exalted his rank!" he went on with ominous reference to the Prince. "I will have them confronted with the child's naked corpse and so force confession from their unwilling mouths, whether they will or no," he concluded, his superstitious nature, in its sorrow, reverting to the ancient and revered ordeal of his people.

"It were a useless ceremony, oh King, for the Prince and those he has perverted think, as you know, but lightly of our sacred customs. The deed is but a part of the general plot and so false-swearing and counter-accusations will follow as a matter of course; for those, oh King, who seek to strike you down and murder your Queen, are as indifferent to oaths as they are to the lives of men," Attalus answered, as if there could be no doubt of the guilt of the accused.

"I will look into it, and death, swift and terrible, shall be the fate of the assassins," the King answered with grim ferocity.

At this moment Antipater approaching, Philip turned to him in anger, exclaiming:

"Were you, too, one of my assailants, that you should have been so conveniently absent when my life hung in the balance? Answer me, for as you know it is to your watchful eyes and sober head that I trust my body and throne when seeking reprieve of labor in the frivolities of the court."

"I am neither an assassin nor an abettor, as you well know, oh King," Antipater answered resolutely. "I was absent making the rounds of the fortress, and so saw nothing of what occurred."

"Yes, yes, but have the conspirators been put under arrest? Surely this should have been done ere now," the King queried fretfully.

"No, oh King, for there was such clatter of accusation and counter-accusation that I knew not what to think, but finding you lying helpless I raised you in my arms and brought you here. Then seeing you safe and

unharmed, I left you to look to the security of the fortress," Antipater answered simply. "Attalus will confirm all I have said, and if he will, can inform you of everything that occurred; of which I know nothing whatever."

"It is as he avers, oh King," Attalus interposed. "He acted as is his wont, with promptness and fidelity, and cannot be censured in any way."

"That I, who have never distrusted those about me, should be threatened while feasting with my friends and in the presence of our Persian guests, fills me more with shame than fear," the brave King answered truly enough.

"It is the fate of Kings to be ever threatened, and happy the monarch who has loyal friends about his person to frustrate the plots of his enemies. Tonight those who would destroy you have been unsuccessful; tomorrow they may be more fortunate if you allow them unconstrained liberty," Attalus answered insinuatingly.

"Tonight shall see them all under guard," the King responded, flashing a look of determination on those present, "and that no time may be lost you will at once convene a council of officers to try them and pass judgment on their acts. And that no formal custom may be omitted, see that the verdict is approved afterwards by the common soldiers," he concluded with a bitter smile.

"I will lose no time in doing as you command, oh King," Attalus answered with avidity, and this the more readily as all of the officers present were in the main participants in the conspiracy. And of the soldiers in Pella and about the palace he felt secure, as they had

been selected with a view to their fidelity to his interests at this important juncture of affairs.

"Lose not a moment. If I have been foolishly indulgent heretofore, they shall find me not lacking in severity now," the King exclaimed. "But where is the Queen?" he cried, looking about and noting her absence for the first time. "Was she not apprised of my illness and the attack on my life?" he continued angrily.

"Yes, oh King, for I myself sent a page to tell her, and ere he left she made ready to obey the summons," Attalus answered. "I know not the cause of her detention," he went on, anxiously looking about him.

"'Tis simple enough, oh King, for while hastening to your side she was met and detained by the Prince. I myself saw them, and when she would have put him off he grasped her by the arm and so detained her unwillingly. Until, at last, frightened by his speech and action, the poor Queen fainted, falling to the ground as one dead," Amyntas interposed with malicious particularity, word having been brought him of the interview between Alexander and Cleopatra.

"By the Gods, this is too much!" the King cried, his face purple with rage. "The impudence of the wretch surpasses belief. Was it not enough that he should have sought to kill me but he must now place my Queen in thralldom?" he went on, his anger increasing. "Go, Attalus, lose not a moment in placing him under arrest. This done, assemble the court, as I have said, and once the verdict is reached bring it to me. However weak I may be, however decrepit they may think me, I still have strength to approve your action. There, go, it were

vain to plead with me," he cried with savage energy as Attalus seemed to hesitate; and grieved and angered beyond power of speech, the poor King turned his face to the wall. Seeing this the conspirators slowly left the room, Attalus bidding the guard at the entrance to the King's room to deny access to every one save the Queen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ALEXANDER'S FLIGHT FROM PELLA.

Fearful lest the King should change his mind, Attalus lost no time in dispatching Lyncestes and a guard to arrest Alexander. This he had no difficulty in accomplishing, for on his explaining that it was the King's order the Prince delivered up his sword, too much overcome by this last stroke of misfortune to protest against the outrage. Afterwards, upon being ushered into his cell, he was surprised and his heart stirred to find it to be that reserved for condemned prisoners of state. To confirm this and as if to invite the victim to prepare for death, a sacrificial altar stood in the corner of the room whereon wood was laid ready to be lighted. Beside it bread and wine was placed as an offering and a libation to the Gods. Seeing this, and overcome by what had passed, he sank down on the stone bench that ran along the side of the narrow cell. While sitting thus disconsolate meditating on what had occurred, but more than all thinking of Roxana, a light flashed in his face, and looking up he beheld Hephestion's smiling countenance. Springing to his feet in glad surprise Alexander cried out:

"You here, Hephestion? Thrice welcome! It is like you, when everyone seemed to have abandoned me, to hasten to me in my distress."

Throwing himself on his knees and kissing Alexander's hand, Hephestion answered, tears filling his eyes at the sad situation of the Prince:

"Do not think your friends have abandoned you, but rather that your enemies, in their cunning, have driven them away, for their lives and swords are now, as in the past, at your disposal."

"Forgive me, sweet friend, 'twas a thoughtless speech," Alexander quickly responded.

"In proof of what I say, if proof be needed, they await you armed and mounted, at the temple of Minerva to aid you in your flight."

"My flight! Has the King changed his mind, or Attalus concluded it were better that I were somewhere else, and so connives at my escape?"

"No, and it were idle to expect such a thing, oh Prince. Knowing this, your friends have thought out a way to effect your escape, and so I am here."

"My brave friend!" Alexander cried, embracing him. "But I cannot leave the fortress thus. It would be a cowardly act. No! I will stay and face my enemies," he went on in a determined voice.

"Such right will never be granted you, oh Prince; or only the semblance of it, for you are condemned already."

"Condemned! No! No! They dare not thus strike me down unheard. It is not possible the King should sanction so cowardly an act," Alexander concluded, but with less assurance. as his eyes rested on the sacrificial altar.

"Your presence in the cell of the condemned is proof of what I say. Your enemies, aided by Cleopatra, have

overcome the will of the King, and a court of officers has been called, with Attalus at its head, to try you for treason."

"For treason!" Alexander exclaimed, his face flushing with anger.

"Yes, and before a court made up of your enemies, for Clitus and the others have fled to escape a like fate."

"The Gods be praised for that!"

"Condemned by the court, its action will be confirmed by the troops; for all these belong to Attalus' corps, as you know, and being bound to him will lose no time in doing as he says."

"How know you all this?" Alexander cried, amazed at what the other said.

"From Demetrius, who heard what passed in the King's chamber, and hastened to me to devise a way for your escape ere it was too late."

"'Twas a generous act," Alexander murmured, much affected.

"But of this Clitus and the others had already thought. For immediately you were arrested, suspecting a plot, they hastened to me that I, being captain of the guard, might devise a means for your escape. This I have done, sweet Prince."

"You! And how, good friend?"

"'Twas simple enough, oh Prince, for there being great confusion throughout the palace I suffered some of my soldiers to visit the banquet hall. There, drinking their fill, they returned with skins of wine, of which the others partook, and thus all became drunk."

"'Twas a thought worthy of Clitus," Alexander murmured admiringly.

"Yes, but in half an hour, nay, while we speak, the watch may be changed and our plans brought to naught," Hephestion answered anxiously. "There is not a moment to be lost, oh Prince, if you would effect your escape."

"Go on, for I can see no way, Hephestion," Alexander answered, looking about him.

"There is but one, oh Prince, and that easy enough," Hephestion replied, pointing to the window of the cell. "'Tis high up, but we have scaled many a loftier wall in our youth," he went on cheerfully. "And if the opening be somewhat small you may still crowd your body through."

"By the Gods! I could squeeze my body through half the space if only to reward your devotion," Alexander answered, looking on his friend with admiring eyes.

"Once you have passed the opening, it will be easy to reach the water beneath."

"Yes, but how, good friend?"

"In this way," Hephestion answered, disclosing a stout cord of bull's hide which he carried concealed beneath his cloak. "There," he went on without further words, busying himself in fastening the thong to Alexander's belt, "'tis strong enough to hold Ossa's weight."

"You have forgotten nothing," Alexander exclaimed, struck with admiration at Hephestion's loving forethought.

"When you reach the water cut the thong and your weight being released I will know you are free," Hephestion continued with anxious voice, slipping his dagger beneath Alexander's belt.

"But you, Hephestion! What will become of you?" Alexander cried, starting back. "My escape being discovered within the hour, you will be put to death ere the sun rise! No, good friend! I will not permit the sacrifice, however willingly you make it," he concluded, throwing himself down on the stone bench.

"Not so, oh Prince. For once you are gone I will relock the cell and no one can certainly tell how you escaped. Hasten, then, if you would not ruin me by delay, for the watch may be here while we talk." Saying which he hastened to that part of the cell beneath the opening, and bending down cried out: "Come, sweet Prince, 'tis like the pranks for which Leonidas used to punish us in our youth. There! The old trick," he cried as the Prince, hesitating no longer, sprang upon his shoulders.

Thus assisted Alexander reached the ledge, and drawing himself up forced his body through the opening, casting a look of love and devotion on his friend as he disappeared through the narrow window. Hephestion, presently straining beneath the tightened cord, knew that his master swung in mid-air high above the murky waters. Slowly letting out the thong, hours seemed to pass ere it slackened, and he knew the Prince was safe. Hauling up the cord its sharply severed end showed that Alexander had descended unharmed. Offering up a silent prayer to the Gods Hephestion concealed the thong beneath his cloak and hastily left the cell.

Reaching the water Alexander rested his hand on the base of the gloomy fortress. Looking toward the city, the lights from the openings of the citadel reflected on

the dark water like glistening stars, but about the base of the structure everything was hidden in inky darkness. Lowering himself into the water he swam toward the shore, keeping within the shadow of the great building. Reaching the open river the flaring torches about the entrance of the fortress cast their light across the murky waters, plainly revealing the objects on its surface; but there being no other way to reach the shore he kept straight on, letting his body sink beneath the glistening mirror. Thus he made his way to land and climbing the steep bank lost no time in hastening to the sacred temple of Minerva as Hephestion had said. Seeing him approach running at full speed Clitus cried in a voice he vainly sought to subdue:

"'Tis the Prince, comrades, beard of Cyclops, and unharmed."

Approaching the group Alexander held out his hands in love and grateful thanks. At this each man, holding fast his bridle rein, dropped upon his knees and grasping the Prince's outstretched hands pressed them to their lips. Lifting them up he embraced them in turn, and coming last to Clitus, that doughty warrior releasing him from his mighty grasp, cried out:

"Here is your armor, oh Prince, and here your horse," he added presently revealing Alexander's mighty steed.

Delighted beyond measure at this last evidence of his friends' love, Alexander donned his armor and losing no time sprang upon the back of his gallant steed. The others hastening to do the same, the cavalcade at once set out, and it being now near the hour of midnight and the streets deserted they gained the northern extremity of the

city without adventure of any kind. At this point a narrow causeway intervened traversing the great swamp as it does today, connecting the capital with the open plain. At the further extremity of the raised road a garrison was stationed for the better protection of the city, commanded by Harpalus, the King's lieutenant. Alexander, leading the way, the little body of horsemen entered the narrow causeway at a gallop, Clitus crying out with exultant voice:

"Harpalus will not molest us if we but drop an obol in his wide palm, unless he thinks more can be gained by dallying," referring to that officer's well-known love of money.

Scarce, however, had he ceased speaking than a flaming signal flashed from the summit of the great fortress, and after it another and then another. Seeing this Ptolemy cried out disconsolately:

"Your escape has been discovered, oh Prince, and all too soon."

"'Tis the King's signal, warning his soldiers to capture, dead or alive, any who may be abroad without license," Antigonus, the veteran, interposed as the light flashed forth anew in the now darkened sky. "'Twas a thing often seen in the early days of Philip's reign, and boded no good to those who fled," he went on reflectively.

To these comments Alexander made no response save to draw his sword and urge his horse to greater effort. As they thus neared the guard at topmost speed they were met with the shrill cry:

"Halt! In the King's name!"

To this Alexander's only answer was a savage cry to charge, and in a moment the little band of spurring horsemen shot out of the darkness into the glare of the flaring torches. Trampling under foot or striking down with flat of sword the bewildered soldiers who obstructed the way, the Prince and his companions gained the open plain beyond. Wheeling his horse about, Alexander cried to Harpalus, who stood leaning on his spear beside the road:

"In your report to the King, Harpalus, say that his son commended your defense. Against other than Macedonians it might have been effective. Tell him that Alexander, free, asks nothing at his hands. When the throne is vacant," he went on, "I will return to fill it. Until then I will not disturb the peace of the kingdom by internal war. Except, and mark you the exception well, Harpalus, except the Princess Roxana be harmed or the King put my followers to death. If he do either I will gather the barbarians of the North and West, and returning, put to death all who have insulted my mother or sought to destroy her son. Farewell!" And wheeling the Prince and his companions disappeared in the darkness of the night.

Turning abruptly to the left and circling the great swamp, Alexander and his companions kept on at headlong speed. Reaching the river below the city, Clitus and those with him understood at last the object of this strange detour. For Alexander, no longer regarding his enemies or the signals that continued to flash from the great fortress, thought only of Roxana and the cry of anguish that would burst her heart were he not the first

to tell her of the misfortune that overwhelmed him. Approaching the shore opposite Parcledes' hut, he bade his companions await his return, and plunging his horse into the dark waters gained the opposite shore. Giving his horse to Ossa, who had challenged him with uplifted spear ere he reached the bank, he hastened, with barely a word of explanation, to the now silent hut. Striking the door a slave opened it, revealing Roxana sitting alone and disconsolate in the middle of the great room. Beholding him she uttered a cry of joy and then of fear, exclaiming as she clasped him in her arms:

"You here, Iskander, and in armor?"

"Yes, my sweet, and without harm of any kind, as you may see, save the wetting," he answered, caressing her.

"Why the wetting, love, when the highway is open to you?" she queried, scanning his face with troubled countenance.

"That I might the sooner clasp you in my arms, my child," he answered, pressing a kiss on her upturned face.

"That is not all, Iskander. There is some mystery back of it that you are hiding from me," she exclaimed with troubled voice.

"Only such mystery as you may readily guess from the day's happenings at Pella."

"Oh, Iskander! You are flying, and for your life," she cried, trembling.

"If that be so, and I save my life, what else matters, Roxana? For one may overcome every misfortune save death," he answered, closing her mouth with a kiss. "It is the fate of Princes, as you know," he went on with

cheerful voice, striving to quiet her, "to live secure today and fly for their lives tomorrow."

"Oh, Iskander!"

"Let not the prospect dishearten you, Roxana. You who have so courageous a heart; who fear naught more than men. If I fly it is but for a day. Nor do I go unfriended, for beyond the river Clitus and others like him await me. With them there is no danger, love, that may not befall men in the common risks of war."

"It is as I feared," she replied, little reassured. "But what dreadful thing has happened at the palace to cause you to fly so suddenly?"

"Nothing that you did not clearly foresee, sweet love. The King, surrounded by his enemies and mine, yet listens to their lies. At last, being wrought up to a pitch of fury, when only half accountable for his acts, he ordered my imprisonment and trial for treason."

"For treason!" she cried in terror. "You accused of treason, Iskander? You, the soul of loyalty and honor?" she went on, horrified at the foul charge.

"Yes, but happily my friends coming to my aid, I am free and armed, as you see, and being so may laugh at my enemies."

"Free! when you must fly the country, an unhappy wanderer, a price on your head and ever finding an enemy where you thought to greet a friend," she exclaimed with a shudder, remembering the fate of Persia's princes when thus bereft of friends.

"Nay, put not so bad a face upon it, Roxana," he answered with cheerful confidence, kissing her tear-stained

face. "In Epirus and Illyria I have friends, and may there await in safety the return of happier days. Till then, sweet love, we must steel our hearts to abide the fortunes of the hour with such patience as we can."

"Oh, Iskander, I cannot part from you thus, I cannot," she cried in despair. "You have filled this far-off country with friendship and love, and away, I shall suffer the sorrows of a double exile."

"It will not be for long, for the King is both great and magnanimous, and will not credit the stories he has been told when his mind clears. 'Tis too monstrous to believe."

"No, no! Those about him will add lie on lie until you are forever ruined," she answered despairingly.

"Those who now menace me will, I being away, contrive against the King, and so I shall soon return either to succor or succeed him," he answered with a sad smile. 'Till that day we must wait. With change of fortune I will come back to claim you, or if you be no longer here, wherever you may be I will seek you out."

"But I will have returned ere then to my own country, Iskander, and you know not its customs in respect to such as I," she answered, tears flooding her eyes. "For such stress will be laid upon me by the great King that I shall be compelled, whether or no, to do as he commands."

"To become the wife of one that he will choose for you," Alexander answered, his brow darkening with vexation and anger.

"Yes, for being unwedded I shall have no choice," she answered sorrowfully.

"Then I will make you my wife now and here, ere I leave you," he exclaimed after a moment, captivated by the thought.

"Your wife!"

"Yes, according to the sacred rites of my country."

"The great King will little regard such rites, Iskander, thinking them barbarous and nowise binding upon him or me."

"Then we will wed according to the Persian rites as well, my love. Thus you will be bound to me by ties held sacred both by your countrymen and mine."

To this she made no other answer than to clasp him about the neck with the cry "I love you, I love you, Iskander!"

"A loaf of bread and a goblet of wine," he continued, deeply affected, responding to her soft caress, "is all we need to seal the union according to our simple rites. Then, however widely separated, we shall still be united." And turning from her he called a slave and bade her fetch him bread and wine.

While awaiting this Parcledes and her daughter entering the room Alexander saluted them with a kiss, exclaiming:

"You come in good time, sweet cousins, to see us wed. For now and here, according to our ancient rites, I shall take Roxana to be my wife."

Hearing this the Princess and her daughter looked up astonished, but being accustomed to the arbitrary will of Kings they made no comment save to bow their heads.

"Come, Roxana," he went on, leading her to the altar, which according to the customs of ancient Greece occu-

pied a place in the great room. There, kneeling down and taking his sword, he severed the loaf of bread which the slave had brought, giving half to Roxana and retaining the other half himself. Pouring wine on the severed parts as a libation, each partook of that which they held, and doing so became husband and wife according to the Macedonian form of approbation and union.

"Now we are one, my love, and nothing can part us save death," Alexander exclaimed, clasping her in his arms and covering her face with kisses.

"But I am only half your wife," she answered, smiling through her tears, "until we are wed according to the Persian rites."

"And what are they?" he cried, impatiently. "Tell me that we may be wholly bound to each other."

"I have but to kiss you and you to return it, and by that simple ceremony we are wed," she answered, her face suffused with blushes. Then pulling him down to her she kissed him on the mouth; and he returning it they became man and wife according to the sacred rites of Persia.

"'Tis a ceremony devised by lovers," Alexander exclaimed enraptured, pressing her face to his. "Now you are doubly and wholly mine, and naught can part us."

Thus they stood for many minutes, neither speaking, their hearts throbbing with the sweet ecstasy of love. At last, releasing her, he took her hand and turning to Parcledes and her daughter exclaimed:

"Thus you have witnessed our double marriage, sweet cousins. If I live you shall verify it if need be; or should I die," he went on with sober voice, "then the more need

that she, being my wife, shall receive the protection it accords her, both here and in her own land."

In this way they were wed, and bread and wine being brought, the little group sat down to the simple repast as if it were the wedding banquet of an emperor, as indeed it proved to be. Thus an hour passed when Ossa, suddenly throwing wide the door, cried out:

"The soldiers of the King approach the house from every side, oh Prince; in a moment they will be here and your presence discovered. There is no time to lose," he went on as Alexander sat still, his face flushed with anger, "if you would not bring misfortune on the Princess and those she shelters beneath her roof."

Hearing this Alexander sprang to his feet and instantly all was confusion. But Roxana, who a moment before shrank with terror, now thinking only of the safety of her beloved, grasped his arm and partly leading and partly dragging him reached the open door.

"It is you they seek, and I, by keeping you, will have caused your death," she cried, urging him forward. "But where is his horse, Ossa?" she asked impatiently, peering about her in the darkness.

"In Clitus' charge beyond the river, sweet Princess. I thought it the better way if it should happen, as it has, that we were taken by surprise. Now a moment only is needed for him to cross in the boat which lies fastened to the shore."

Reaching the river bank, Roxana threw her arms about the neck of Alexander convulsed with grief. Thus they stood without speaking, he holding her close in his arms, his face pressed against hers. Nor had he thought of re-

leasing her until hearing the near approach of the King's soldiers she pushed him from her, crying as she kissed him on both his cheeks:

"My love, my husband; fly, fly, ere it is too late!"

But Alexander, grasping her again in his arms, cried out in grief and rage:

"I will not leave you, Roxana, but stay and abide my fate. Anything were better than leaving you thus."

"You shall not, Iskander! 'Twould be but for a moment and I should die if aught befell you. Fly, fly then, if you love me!" and kissing him again she turned and ran to the hut, closing and bolting the door. Here, strength and courage both failing her, she uttered a cry of despair as she fell insensible in Parcledes' outstretched arms.

Alexander, watching her vanishing form, his heart torn with grief and rage, would have followed, but Ossa, grasping him in his gigantic arms, lifted him into the boat, pushing it far into the stream. Crossing to the opposite shore without adventure he called to Clitus, and that sturdy soldier, taking the Prince, put him astride his horse. Now all his friends gathering about him with sorrowing hearts they turned their horses' heads to the West and in a moment were lost to sight.

All night they rode, Alexander making no sign but sitting his horse as if dead or asleep. His companions close about him said little, but watched with anxious eyes, the flaming signals that flared the night through from plain and mountain side. When morning dawned the little troop found themselves amid the forest-covered foothills that bordered the mountains to the west of Pella. Clitus

awakening to life with the day, gave a cry of joy at sight of the green trees and towering mountains. But presently Eumenes, raising his hand pointed through an opening in the forest to a troop of Thracian mercenaries occupying the mountain pass in their front.

"See! We are too late. The King's troops already occupy the pass," he exclaimed, under his breath, as if the trees had ears.

Hearing him, Alexander roused himself and reining in his horse sat still observing the movements of their enemies.

"Is there no other pass?" he exclaimed at last, his eyes flaming at sight of the soldiers who obstructed their path. "These mountains are an open book to you, Clitus," he went on without taking his eyes off the King's troops.

"There is no other, oh Prince, except to the far south and that at Edessa to the north. This before us is but a bridle path and scarce known save by the shepherds. In the wars it is never thought worth while to guard it, and so we believed it would be open now," he answered with angry impatience.

"The King pays us a compliment then in this new disposition," Alexander answered absently as he sat unmoved, scrutinizing the pass and the nature of the intervening ground. Thus he continued for a long time, saying nothing. At last, gathering up his reins, he cried:

"Come with me, Clitus. We lose rather than gain by waiting. You, my brave friends," he went on, turning to the others, "remain under cover, until you hear the cry to charge," and putting spurs to his horse, followed by Clitus, he galloped into the narrow plain that lay be-

tween them and the ascending pass. Concealing their arms they rode forward in seeming ignorance of danger, or thought of it. Thus they traversed half the width of the valley, when Alexander, suddenly throwing his horse back on his haunches, pointed out the Thracian soldiers to Clitus as if seeing them now for the first time. Waiting a moment as if to determine their number, Alexander and his companion turned about and slowly made their way toward the forest. Seeing they were discovered the Thracian soldiers charged down the side of the mountain at headlong speed amid the blare of trumpet and cries of triumph. Alexander and Clitus, now increasing their speed as if intent upon escaping, quickly reached the cover of the woods where their companions were concealed. Here they waited until the Thracian troop neared the forest in wild disorder, thinking but lightly of their enemy. Seeing this, Alexander raised his sword, and without cry or noise of any kind, the little band emerged from the forest at full speed. Surprised at their number and close array, the King's officers sought to form their troops in compact column, but Alexander leading the way, the little band struck the disorganized soldiers like a thunder-bolt. Breaking through the widely scattered line, they stopped not, but increasing the speed of their horses, lost no time in gaining the pass from which the Thracian troop had just emerged. Here, turning about, they formed anew to receive their enemies, who, filled with anger and shame at the trick played upon them, lost no time in attempting to regain the pass. Waiting until the King's soldiers entered the mouth of the narrow gap, the Prince gave the

signal to charge. Now, having every advantage, the horsemen leading the Thracian column, unable to withstand the fiery onslaught, turned and fled; and these disorganizing those who followed, the whole troop were in a moment in tumultuous flight. Pursuing them to the edge of the valley, Alexander called a halt, and, turning about, the little band slowly reascended the pass.

Reaching the camp of their enemies they dismounted and picketed and fed their worn horses. Then offering a sacrifice and libation to the Gods for their escape from death, they sat down in joyful contentment to the steaming breakfast that the Thracian soldiers had left untasted in their camp. Thus ended the events of the day and night that followed the return of the forceful King to Pella; events that historians have commented upon with never failing interest from that day to the present time.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PRAYER TO JUPITER.

Worn out with fatigue and the sorrowful events of the preceding day and night, Alexander and his companions rested until midday beside the stream that marked the narrow pass. Then, refreshed, they began the ascent of the cold and rugged heights that towered above their heads. Making little progress, they camped for the night midway on the mountain side amid a sheltered grove of pines. Here they lighted fires to warm their chilled bodies and as a protection for their horses against the savage animals that had their haunts amid these remote solitudes. Partaking of a hearty supper from the abundant spoils of the Thracian camp, they gathered boughs for beds, and throwing themselves down on the fragrant stems were soon lost in sleep. Arising at dawn, rested and refreshed, they continued the ascent of the lofty mountain, Clitus leading the way with song and story, happy at being once more amid his native wilds. Reaching the summit, the wild scenery of the Haliacmon and its myriad tributaries, lay spread out before them in all its varied splendor. Descending the mountain side, they found the country beyond wild and rugged in the extreme. Traversed by swift running streams, fed by springs and mountain snows, no path penetrated the gloomy forests and lonely glens. Emerging from these worn and somewhat disheartened they sought a way in the beds of shallow streams or along the edge of sombre

canons and towering precipices. At last, as they approached the Haliacmon, its presence was long heralded by the thunder of its cataracts and the deep mists that rose from its foaming waters. Crossing at a lonely ford to which Clitus guided them, they reached at the close of the third day the upper stretches of the Cambunian mountains. Making their way to the summit they beheld before them Pindus' lofty heights. These surmounted with laborious effort, they looked back with thankful hearts over the woodlands and mountains they had traversed to the far-off fertile plains of Thessaly. Turning again to the West, and in chilling contrast, the bare and rugged country of Epirus lay before them in all its nakedness. Straining their eyes naught met their view save tumbled masses of mountains and gloomy valleys, wherein sluggish streams festered in stagnant marshes or were lost in dark and impenetrable canons. But here, however uninviting the prospect, safety lay; for this was the land they sought, the country ruled over by Alexander's uncle, the Epirot King after whom he was named.

Weary and chilled with the cold and biting winds, the little troop hurried on, seeking shelter for the night in a cave beneath a granite cliff. Resuming their journey early the succeeding morning, afternoon found them looking down with delighted hearts upon the ancient and sacred shrine of Dodona. To the right, as they gazed with eager eyes, lake Pambotis sparkled and glimmered in the declining sun, reflecting in its beauty the theme of poet and minstrel for unnumbered ages of Grecian life. To the left there rose a mountain of barren rock, but nearer by, as if in contrast, groves of venerable oaks ap-

peared, interspersed with sequestered dales and open meadows.

At the base of the forbidding height, and clinging to its barren side, Alexander beheld with beating heart the shrine of Zeus. Clustered about the sanctuary, as lesser heights crowd about a central dome, other and smaller edifices stood revealed to him. Picturing it as he had been told, he saw the grove of sacred oaks, the prophetic tree of Jupiter, and beside it the mysterious spring of purling water encircling about the blazened statue of Dione. Scanning the sacred spot with eager interest, Seleucus, who had visited the shrine, pointed out the protecting citadel, and beyond the stately structure wherein the games in Zeus' honor were celebrated. At one side the treasury of the mighty God stood revealed and a step away the sacred place of offerings beside the venerable temple of Aphrodite. Not a thing escaped the eager Prince as he stood motionless surveying the tranquil scene. Here he remembered the Gods of ancient Greece first found a sanctuary; here was the birthplace of Grecian belief; here it was that Zeus, the Supreme Deity, first made known his will to men.

As the little group stood thus watching and commenting on the interesting picture a storm springing up in the mountains, accompanied by lightning and rolling thunder, gave such reality to the scene that all, with one accord, springing from their horses, fell upon their knees in prayer and supplication. Rising to their feet, they feasted their eyes anew on the sacred spot, hallowed by the presence of Jupiter and the remembrance of unnumbered ages of suppliants who had worshipped at his shrine.

Pursuing their way, they reached at last the imposing entrance to the sacred inclosure. Here, on their knees, with bowed heads, they deposited, with barefooted and austere priests, such offerings as they had. Of these Alexander had naught save the chain about his neck and the embossed battle shield he bore upon his arm. These he gave with prayers and fervent sighs that he had naught else to offer.

"The gift of the heart and belief in the Gods make whatever token be offered acceptable to Zeus," the ancient priest answered, bending in low obeisance to the sacred temple standing half hidden amid the wide spreading oaks.

"My people for a thousand years have given their hearts and of their treasures to Zeus, and so they will continue to do as long as time lasts," Alexander reverently answered.

"Whence come ye?" the priest inquired, but without animation, as if individuals, however many or great, were as naught in the presence of the mighty God.

"We come as suppliants, fugitives from an implacable enemy," Alexander answered simply.

"All find welcome and protection here, the suppliant more than the others, if distinction there be," the ancient priest answered solemnly. "But who are ye, if you care to make yourself known; though it matters not if you desire otherwise."

"We have no cause longer to hide our names or lineage, thanks to the protecting care of Zeus, and so I may tell you I am Alexander, the son of Olympias of the house of

Epirus, whose kings have reigned over this ancient country for a thousand years," he answered with bowed head.

"So I thought, for your color and voice and hair are Olympias' and your high features bear her lineaments, ere she left the solitudes of these Epirot mountains and valleys to dwell amid the swine of Philip's court," he continued with angry vehemence. "In her youth, know thou, and it is a thing for you to treasure, she was of such supreme beauty and majesty that the Great God was thought to have watched over her birth."

"She is not less beautiful nor less majestic now, oh priest, and in her deep distress has greater need than in her youth for Zeus' love and protecting care," Alexander answered, sadly thinking of his mother, a wanderer on the face of the earth.

"He loses not interest with passing years in those whom he has treasured; and Olympias has, as in her youth, his love and protecting care. But is there aught else you crave," he went on, scanning Alexander more closely. "If so, the God will listen with patience to your prayer."

"Yes, good priest, but I would delay it if I might until the morrow, when I may present myself in more fit attire," Alexander answered, excusing himself.

"Such things you will find, and all else beside, in yonder protecting citadel," the priest replied, and lifting his hands the aged guardian of the gate turned and slowly made his way toward the sacred temple.

Remounting their horses the little party soon reached the lofty citadel, which opened wide its gates at their approach. Offering up a sacrifice for their deliverance, food

and wine were provided them by the aged attendants, after which each sought the couch assigned him for the night.

On the morrow, rising with the dawn, they sought the secluded lake, and having bathed, donned the white robes given them at the castle. Thus arrayed and their feet encased in sandals of untanned leather, they sought the sacred temple of Zeus.

Conducted to the presence of the venerable Selli or high priest, Alexander transcribed on the leaden plate that was given him the preferment he wished to make. And thinking always of Roxana, and not at all of his own fortunes or their outcome, this was his simple prayer:

"Thou, oh Zeus, the divine God, say if thou wilt smile upon my love, bringing it at last to a happy issue."

Presenting this on bended knees to the high priest, the latter caused it to be borne to the Peleidades or sacred priestesses who stood in sombre stillness, half revealed, within the entrance to the lofty temple.

"The man who named these ancient women with their uncombed hair and disheveled dress 'doves' must have been blind or crazed," Clitus whispered to his companion, referring to an ancient custom of calling the Dodonian priestesses "doves." "These lean and shriveled priests too! Bah! Do they never bathe?" he went on, pointing to the venerable prophets, whose ascetic vows forbade them to wear shoes or wash their feet.

"Silence, Clitus! Dare you scoff in the very presence of the Gods?" Alexander exclaimed in an angry voice. To this Clitus made no reply save to raise his hand in vexation that what he had said should have been overheard by his master.

"Return, my son, on the morrow," the high priest at last exclaimed, "when the divine priestess has listened to the sounding timbrels of hanging bronze and meditated on their mysterious import; then, when she shall have tasted of the miraculous waters of the sacred spring, Zeus, whispering from amid the rustling oaks, will make known his answer."

Taking their departure the little party sought the citadel, returning the following morning as had been appointed. Reaching the sacred enclosure they waited beneath the murmuring oaks for the high priest to make known the answer of the divine oracle. Nor was it long ere he made his appearance, for presently emerging from the temple surrounded by priestly attendants he approached bearing a golden salver, studded with jewels. Upon this the sacred script containing the answer of Zeus lay exposed. Kneeling, Alexander received it, bending low over the priceless treasure. At last summoning courage he raised it to his eyes and this is what he read:

"Despair not of thy love, oh Prince, until twice a King it shall still be denied thee."

Upon perusing the Delphic utterance Alexander was much cast down and remained long upon his knees, pondering on what he read. At last lifting up his head he thanked the priest, and promising the oracle some fit offering when fortune smiled upon him, he arose and slowly withdrew from the sacred grove. Long he remained silent, filled with sad thoughts and melancholy forebodings, but at last, divulging the answer to his companions, they could make nothing of it more than he. Reflecting upon it over night Seleucus, who was much

versed in such things, having once thought to be a priest, came to the Prince at break of day, crying:

"I have the riddle, oh Prince, and 'tis as plain as a goose's egg. Thus when Persia is won, as will surely happen, you will after Philip, or mayhap before, reign over it in place of Darius. Then being already King of Macedonia, you will be twice a king, and so till then you need not despair of your love," he concluded with a smiling countenance.

"Is it with such foolish thoughts that you would seek to comfort me, Seleucus?" Alexander asked with a sad smile, averting his face.

"Nay, 'tis good sense, oh Prince," Clitus interposed, accepting what the other said in simple faith. "For you shall be King of Macedonia in good time and afterwards King of Persia, as we have so often talked in idle fancy."

"We will make our way like men, Clitus, whatever fate befall us," the Prince answered, smiling upon his faithful friend, "but does our present flight look as if I should be twice a king, or indeed a king at all, this twenty years? Disowned and hunted by all Greece, as I shall be ere a month passes, I am more like to die ere the moon changes than to be twice crowned as Seleucus says."

"Lose not heart, oh Prince, over much thinking of your love," Clitus cried in response "For by the beard of Cyclops we will in good time carve a two-fold crown for you with our naked swords, if the sweet Roxana, the Gods bless her, be content with nothing less."

Smiling his love in response Alexander made no other reply. And now having nothing further to detain them at Dodona the little party returned to the citadel and donning their armor resumed their journey.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GLAUCUS, THE BARBARIAN.

Alexander, little comforted, now directed his steps to Passaron, the ancient capital of Epirus, where for a thousand years the Molossian Kings had received their crowns. Reaching the ancient castle that topped the heights above the town, he found the King had transferred his court to the seashore, as was his yearly habit. Leaving Passaron, a day's easy journey brought them in sight of the Ionian Sea. Here, looking down from the lofty heights, they traced at their feet the wild and foaming Acheron, as it descended the steep incline in a torrent of mist and spray to the placid sea. Near its mouth, amid a verdant plain, wooded by stately trees and sloping to the spacious harbor, they beheld with delighted hearts the castle of the Molossian King.

Some news of Alexander's approach having reached the monarch, he mounted a horse and set off with his courtiers to receive the Prince, welcoming him with every show of hospitality and love. But afterwards, on learning the particulars of Alexander's flight from Pella and Olympias' exile, his manner became far less cordial. Noticing this Alexander sought him out, and, asking an explanation of the change, the Epirot King answered after some hesitation:

"I need not tell you, Alexander, that you are welcome at my court. The exiled and suppliant prince ever claims

the protection and hospitality of kings. You, being of my house and treasured in my heart, are thrice welcome. But what of Philip, your father, Alexander? Hasty of temper, impatient of opposition and setting no limit to his animosities, once they are aroused, what may we not expect of him?" he went on with troubled voice. "Learning of your presence here and urged on by your enemies, will he long respect the neutrality of my poor country? And the new Queen and Attalus? Think you they can sleep soundly in their beds so long as you hover like an eagle on the edge of Macedonia? Thus, oh Prince, I will in the end become involved in a hazardous conflict with the mighty King unless I deliver you into his hands, which last you know I will never do."

Unwilling to involve the friendly monarch in so grievous a war, Alexander, embracing and thanking him, answered:

"The sacrifice would be unavailing, oh King, for unable to stay the Macedonian forces your country would be quickly overrun and conquered. To save you this calamity, I and my companions will lose no time in seeking a refuge elsewhere." And that there might be some good excuse for his going, he everywhere proclaimed his determination to set out at once to meet and welcome his mother's return to Epirus.

The King giving his consent and providing him with a stout ship the Prince and his companions lost no time in doing as he said. Keeping near the land their hearts were gladdened on the second day by the approach of a stately galley bearing aloft a crimson sail. Recognizing the Queen's vessel, they raised a shout, and as the ship

came swiftly on the Prince beheld his mother standing motionless on the uplifted platform. Suspecting Alexander's vessel to be an Illyrian pirate, great numbers of which infested the Ionian Sea, the Queen stood watching its approach with anxiety not unmixed with fear. About her in their allotted places her Molossian guards stood armed, prepared to welcome the oncoming vessel as a friend, or repel it as an enemy.

As the great Queen's form came clearly into view its majesty and commanding stature struck those who gazed upon her from Alexander's ship with something akin to awe. Her light blue eyes, hardened by many sorrows, had in their depths at this period of her life no tint of mellowness except as they reflected the image of her beloved son. Above her yellow hair, in which no sign of age appeared, there flared a crimson hat with pointed peak, from which floated a stately plume. This increasing her commanding height added to the supreme majesty of her mien. Clad in a long flowing dress of purple velvet embroidered with silver, the queenly garment displayed her full and voluptuous figure in all its graceful outlines. Over her dress and adding to its splendor she wore a cloak of pink bordered with stripes of green. Strands of heavy gold beads and strings of pearls enveloped her throat, while massive bracelets of gold encircled her arms, showing in their richness and profusion her love of barbaric splendor. In further ornamentation massive girdles of jointed gold inlaid with precious stones glistened about the waist of the great Queen. Harmonizing with this and in supplement thereto similar girdles

were clasped about her ankles above the Theban shoes of snow white leather that encased her feet.

Holding out their hands Alexander and those about him raised a shout of joy and welcome. At this the Queen, recognizing the Prince and those about him, stood motionless and silent, seemingly overcome by wonder and astonishment. This presently giving way to a deeper feeling, she reached out her arms to her son, her face revealing the mingled emotions that stirred her heart. Divining her thoughts and deeply affected, Alexander cried out:

"Hail, Queen of Macedonia! Your son and those you love, come in health to greet and welcome you."

Hearing his voice and divining all that had befallen him, she sank down overcome by her emotions on the bench beside which she stood. The ships now drawing together Alexander hastened to her side, and falling down embraced her knees, as he might have done in childhood. Drawing him to her, unable to speak, she clasped him in her arms, wetting his face with her tears. Thus she held him until regaining her composure in some measure she seated him by her side and questioned him as to the cause of his presence there. To all she asked he answered with such loving reservations as he thought would lighten the blow to her pride and heart. When in this way she had been informed of all that had occurred she commended what he had done and not less his having wed his love the Princess Roxana. After this the Queen, sending for Alexander's companions, gave her hand to each in token of her love and grateful thanks. Now, there being no longer reason for further delay, the ships

spread their sails anew, steering for the Epirot coast from whence Alexander had departed. On nearing their destination they were met by the King's barge, sent in welcome of the Queen, but more directly to warn Alexander of the new danger that threatened him in Epirus. For while he had been away the emissaries of Attalus had arrived, Philip being ill, demanding that Alexander be given up to them or expelled the country, threatening immediate war if their request were denied. In the King's barge also came Hephestion, who had been exiled because of his connivance at Alexander's escape. Clasping him in his arms Alexander kissed him, exclaiming:

"Naught in the world, oh friend, could have so gladdened my heart. It is as if you had returned from the dead," he cried, thinking of the danger the other had braved in aiding his escape.

" 'Twas not so bad as that, oh Prince, for nothing was proven against me, and the King, good-natured, sought not to question me too closely, exclaiming at last as he pinched my chin, 'The air about Pella is not suited to adventurous youths or those whose wounds are unhealed, Hephestion. The seashore were a better place for such invalids.' Saying which he dismissed me with a smile, and I, mounting a horse, set out, as you see."

"Tell me," Alexander exclaimed, again embracing him, and commending his discretion, "tell me something of my sweet love, Roxana. Is she well and bears she up bravely under her afflictions?'

"I did not see her, oh Prince, but Demetrius, who hastened to Parcledes' hut after your departure, told me she was distraught with grief over the dangers that threat-

ened you. Holding close his hand she would listen to no other name but yours, seeming to live and breathe only in the thought of you."

"My sweet love," Alexander exclaimed, unable to say more.

"When the news was signaled of your arrival in Epirus, Demetrius hastened to her again to comfort her and inform her of your escape."

"Gallant and loving heart, how much I owe him," Alexander answered with deep emotion.

While Alexander was thus occupied, his heart agitated with contending emotions, Clitus, ever intent upon his master's affairs, busied himself questioning the King's messenger. From him he learned that the Epirot King was greatly agitated over Attalus' demand, and while having no thought of delivering Alexander up yet sought a way out of the difficulty without giving offense to his powerful neighbor. It was in pursuance of this that he dispatched the messenger as if to welcome his sister, Olympias, but in fact to advise Alexander of his distressful situation.

"Well," exclaimed Clitus when all this had been explained to him, "what does the King advise?"

"He does not venture to advise, good friend," the other answered with reserve, "but suggests that Illyria, being remote and its King always at odds with Philip and ever ready to welcome and protect those who fly from Pella, it would seem to offer Alexander a safer refuge than Epirus, at Philip's very door."

"Go on," Clitus exclaimed sternly, as the other hesitated.

"Believing Alexander would agree with him in this he has dispatched a courier to the Illyrian King advising him of Alexander's probable arrival."

"Then it is all fixed," Clitus exclaimed with little show of politeness, turning on his heel.

Seeking Alexander, he told him what he had heard, and the latter, losing no time, hastened to divulge it to the Queen. Swayed by many contending emotions, they were long in determining what course to follow, but seeing no other way than that proposed by the Molossian King, they finally acquiesced in its necessity. Taking leave of his mother amidst the tears of each, Alexander returned to his ship with his companions and hoisting sail steered his course for Illyria.*

Reaching that country without incident, the King received them with expressions of friendship, entertaining them bountifully in his palace for many days. Nor was this all nor enough to satisfy the hospitable heart of the half-savage monarch. Displaying all his rich treasures, he provided each of Alexander's companions with such varied and sumptuous garments as his rank warranted or his fancy inclined him to select; for in such things the Illyrian King was rich beyond all other monarchs, having in his service many staunch piratical ships which harried the commerce of the Ionian Sea, picking that which was valuable and destroying all else.

While the exiles thus lived sumptuously at the court of the Illyrian King Attalus, hearing of Alexander's presence there, sent officers demanding that he be given up

*Historians generally note the exile of Alexander and his friends but give only meager details of their sojourn in Epirus or the cause of their flight to Illyria.

to them or put to death. In view of this the Illyrian King, being now at peace with Macedonia, advised Alexander to seek a more secure retreat far from the sea, in the impenetrable fastnesses of his kingdom. Acquiescing in this, indifferent to his mode of life, he thanked the monarch for his hospitality, and mounting his horse set out with his friends as the King advised. Clitus reflecting on the Illyrian's action, exclaimed that it was cowardly and lacking in friendship. But in truth the whole world feared Philip's power and the energy with which he pursued his enemies. So that the hospitable King, whose ancestors had thought it a pastime to make war on Macedonia, now went out of his way to evade a conflict.

Ascending the majestic Drilo, Alexander at last reached the domain of Glaucus, the Illyrian chieftain whose territory lay to the north of the great pass that crosses the Scordus Mountains into Macedonia. This warlike and adventurous chief, while hospitable to visitors, was seldom or never at peace with his neighbors. Ravaging their territory when opportunity offered or his temper inclined, he despoiled them of all they had, even of their bodies. For in derision and to keep alive the animosities of his people, he used the skulls of his enemies for drinking cups and lamps and other useful purposes about his house. From one of these he always drank, and if desirous of honoring a guest asked him to do likewise.

"They are the skulls of chiefs once my enemies," he would exclaim with pride, giving the names of the unfortunate victims. "Not caught in ambush, but gathered one and all on the field of battle."

Placed here and there about the interior of his rude

castle, the flaming wicks of flax protruding from the eyeless sockets, gave to the dimly lighted rooms a grewsome appearance, distressing in the extreme to Hephestion and the more tender hearted of Alexander's companions.

"The handles of these torches," he would go on, holding one up to view, "like the lamps and drinking cups, are made of the bones of enemies. Thus a shin bone that would have been left for wolves to gnaw I put to a good use," and tapping the hollow bone his bearded face would light up with a grim smile at thought of the conflict and the number of enemies slain or taken captive.

The subjects of this half savage chieftain were nowise different from their master. Rude shepherds clad in untanned hides or wild boar skins, they watched their flocks in the dark windings of the streams or on the sides of the rugged mountains. Maintaining intact the tribal relations of primitive days, they knew no master but their chief nor recognized any form of government save his will. Fair haired and blue-eyed, they received strangers with hospitality and looked upon the beggars that infested the country as the elect of the Gods. Leading uneventful lives, war was to them at once a source of profit and a pastime. Living in caves or rude hovels made of rough stones or unhewn timber, their little flocks afforded them food and raiment, and if need be a medium of exchange. In their religion, as might have been expected, they kept alive the savage superstitions and customs born of the solitude and wild mythology of primeval man. Such were the Illyrians, the barbarians of the north, in ancient times—the Albanians of today.

Among these primitive children Alexander and his

friends remained many months, passing the time in hunting the savage animals that had their home in the mountains and forests, or participated in the rude pastimes of the savage chief. This with some show of contentment until time passing they noted with apprehension the preparations of their host for some impending war. Not as before, but on a larger scale, as if against a greater enemy. Believing this portended some unfriendly movement against his own country, Alexander, consulting his friends, sought an early excuse for taking his departure. Nor too soon, as it presently appeared, for riding forth one morning with his friends they were startled by the frenzied cries of men and women in the forest near at hand. Turning to one side to ascertain the cause, they came upon the chief and his savage priests immolating the victims that in their superstition they believed necessary to insure victory in the coming war. The helpless creatures thus sacrificed to their savage belief were the pick of the ancient tribe, consisting of three young and fair-haired maidens and a like number of comely youths. And, strangest of all, and in dire contrast, three black rams. Horrified at the distressing sight Alexander and his companions turned and hurried away, the cries of the murdered victims ringing in their ears. Returning to the rude castle of the savage chief they donned their armor and sat down to await his coming. Returning presently, highly pleased at the successful termination of the sacrifice, he was much surprised and grieved when they told him of their determination to depart. Nor could they themselves contemplate it without regret, because of his generous hospitality and unvarying kindness. Thanking

him with grateful hearts, they presented him with such loving tokens as they had, in further evidence of their gratitude. After which, bidding him adieu, they mounted their horses and took their departure with many expressions of friendship and regret.

Note: Of the practice of the Illyrian barbarians and kindred people of sacrificing human beings in their superstition, historians make frequent mention. Thus in the particular case of Kleitus, an Illyrian chief who made war on Alexander in the first year of the latter's reign. Alexander fiercely charging his enemy, the Illyrians retreating behind the walls of Pelion, abandoned the human sacrifices they had just offered up, on the ground before the gates of the city.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHAT THE KING HEARD.

Alexander's enemies gaining confidence as the days passed, sought in every way to defame his character and put an end to his life. First it was whispered about the court that he was organizing an army in Epirus, with the connivance of the Molossian monarch, to invade Macedonia and put the King to death. This story proving to be untrue, many others of like nature took its place. Finally it was said that the Illyrian King, espousing Alexander's cause, was about to invade the country with a great army for the purpose of placing the exiled Prince upon the throne. Philip, ever prompt in action, lost no time in sending spies into the enemy's country to ascertain the truthfulness of what he heard. These shortly returning, reported that the Illyrians were everywhere collecting their forces for the invasion of Macedonia, but whether to aid Alexander or not they were unable to learn. The rumored invasion proving to be true, Philip instantly made preparations to repel the attack, and if successful to carry the war into the enemy's country.

While the King was thus engaged in collecting his army it came to the ears of Amyntas that Clitus had returned to Pella and lay concealed at the house of Parcledes. Bribing a slave of the Princess, he learned that the hardy soldier was in secret conference with other disaffected subjects of the King and that meetings were

held nightly to perfect their plans; but of the extent of the conspiracy, or who was in it, or its particulars, the slave could tell nothing. It was enough for Amyntas that Clitus had returned without the sanction of the King, and doing so had forfeited his life and the lives of those who gave him shelter. Imparting what he had learned to the Queen, and magnifying its importance, the latter lost no time in informing the King. Knowing the deep love the army bore Alexander, Philip was greatly disturbed, and it added to his sorrow that Clitus, whom he still cherished, should become a party to so base an act of rebellion. Distrusting the story yet believing it to be true, he knew not what to do. At last, fearing longer to delay action and uncertain whom to trust, he determined to go himself and inquire into the matter, and if need be arrest the conspirators. Accordingly, summoning a troop of the Companion cavalry, he left the city after nightfall, and reaching Parcledes' house stationed the soldiers about the place, so that no one could escape. Dismounting he advanced alone, and reaching the hut was admitted by the slave whom Amyntas had bribed. Secreting himself in a dark room adjoining that in which the conspirators met, he waited with angry impatience the disclosure of the conspiracy. Nor was it long before voices were heard, and among them that of Clitus, apprising the King that his visit was not in vain. Assured now of the truthfulness of what he had heard, Philip, releasing his dagger, threw himself down beside the closed door to await the disclosure of the plot. Presently, Orestes entering the adjoining room, with Jaron, Clitus, springing up, hastened to them, crying out:

"Greeting, good leech; and you, Orestes, doubly a victim of war and ambuscade. But is it as bad as this," he went on as Orestes advanced, assisted by Jaron, "do your wounds show no sign of healing, my brave comrade?"

"The wound received in the winter battle was not a thing to have troubled him," the leech interposed, "had not the poisoned javelin of Amyntas tainted the blood and so opened the old sore afresh."

"'Twas a cowardly blow, and he who gave it deserved death, but being a Prince and in the King's favor naught was said," Clitus exclaimed bitterly.

"Nay, he was everywhere praised for the act by the faithful, so adroit was his story," Jaron mildly replied.

"While poor Orestes, hidden away and making no sign, was condemned unheard," Eurydice interposed, casting a loving glance on the attractive youth.

"Oh, oh! Does the wind blow that way after these many months? Amyntas' blow was not so unfortunate after all, it appears," Clitus exclaimed under his breath, as he watched the lovers clasp hands beneath the flowing drapery of their garments. "But tell me, Orestes," he went on reflectively, "what speech passed between you and Amyntas that afternoon as we sat on our horses patiently awaiting his movements. I have often thought to question you, but forgot it, as I am apt to do with lesser things."

To this inquiry Orestes offering some opposition, Eurydice cried out:

"Tell him, Orestes, that your name may be cleared in the eyes of the Prince and his friends. For the ungrateful King I care naught."

Whereupon, being thus urged, Orestes told all that Amyntas had said, as recounted in the opening chapter of this story.

"'Tis as I thought at the time, yet could do naught," Clitus exclaimed when the other had finished. "This is the Prince, good friends, whom our simple King trusts before his own son and the faithful officers of his army," he went on with angry speech. "But it is clear enough, Orestes, that 'twas not what you said that precipitated the blow. What was it then?" he concluded, meditatively.

At this Orestes, coloring, would say nothing, until at last Eurydice, adding her importunities to those of the others, he answered:

"Amyntas has ever treasured a bitter hatred against Alexander, and at Cheronea, riding behind the Prince, he sought to transfix him with his lance and, I being a witness to the act, his hatred was also directed towards me."

"To assassinate the Prince!" everyone exclaimed in amazement.

"Yes, and seeing him poise his spear for the stroke I cried out in horror as I sought to prevent the crime, but ere I could grasp the weapon he had thrown the missile."

"And Alexander?" Clitus cried, holding his breath.

"The Prince, as the Gods would have it, stooping at the moment to rescue a companion, the spear passed high above his head. Flying thus unobstructed, it struck the Theban general, killing him on the spot."

"Beard of Cyclops! I have been some use to the state, for it was I the Prince reached down to save," Clitus cried when he could regain his voice.

"Yes," Orestes answered, "and except for your being under the horse's feet and the Prince espying you, Amyntas' lance had certainly killed him."

"The Gods be praised," Clitus fervently responded.

"Nor is that all or half the villainy of this treasonable and murderous Prince," Jaron interrupted in his mild voice, "for it was Amyntas, aided by Attalus, who planned the scene at the banquet that so nearly cost the King and Alexander their lives, though Attalus thought that only the Prince was to be put to death."

"How know you this?" Clitus cried, amazed.

"That I cannot divulge," Jaron answered, evading a direct reply. "It is enough that I was privy to it through those I served. But being a stranger in Pella and having little interest in the matter I did nothing save to privately warn you to go armed to the feast."

"Eye of Cyclops! I remember well the mysterious message, and taking the hint went armed, as did the Prince and his friends, Eumenes and Leonidas. Except for that the King would certainly have been put to death ere succor could have reached him."

"Put to death, say you?" Orestes exclaimed, his pale face flushing at the other's recital.

"Yes, for detecting a conspiracy when the lamps were extinguished, the Prince rushed to Philip's side crying 'the King! the King!!' and we following, the conspirators could by no means beat down our defense, and so were unable to reach either Alexander or the King, who lay insensible on the floor. Thus we stood about Philip's body until Antipater, reaching the scene, the conspirators drew off, continuing their cry of 'Treason.'"

"Another thing that incensed Philip against his son more than the attempt on his life was the story told him that the Prince was enamored of Cleopatra and visited her on the day of the King's arrival for the purpose of pressing his suit, knowing she was pledged to his father," Jaron exclaimed, interrogating Clitus with his searching eyes.

"'Twas a foul lie," Clitus answered enraged. "He went to her house to press Pausanias' suit, knowing nothing of the King's purpose. No! Alexander would not have wed Cleopatra had he been promised the sovereignty of the world, his heart being already pledged to another," he concluded, glancing at Parcledes.

"Why has the King not been told then, if Alexander and his companions are blameless?" Eurydice asked in her childlike faith.

"What good?" Clitus answered scoffingly. "He would not believe us. Time was when the King was not so simple; but 'tis bad for those about when old men fall in love. It blinds the sharpest eyes, they say, and Philip, having but one, is the more easily fooled. But good night, sweet Princess, and you, my friends," he went on, rising to his feet. "Much talk has made me sleepy, and I have far to go on the morrow and a heart that will not make the distance less," and gathering up his hat and cloak he retired without further words. His example being shortly followed by the others, for it was now late, silence and darkness quickly succeeded the animated scene.

When all were gone Philip rose to his feet, his form shaking as with the ague. Indeed, so weak and trembling was he with horror and rage that he had scarce strength

to leave the house or mount his horse. Returning slowly to Pella, he meditated, sometimes in anger but more often in sorrow, on what he had heard. Reaching the fortress, he dispatched a messenger for Parmenio, his general, and announced his intention of setting out for the seat of the Illyrian war at daylight. Giving directions for his escort to be ready he sought his room, denying admission to all save the attendant pages.

Note: Historians refer, but not at any length, to this campaign of Philip against the Illyrian King Pleurias, on the eve of the great festival.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE BATTLE FIELD.

Driven from Epirus and scarcely less welcome in Illyria, Alexander at last determined to return to his own country. There, amid the mountains and wooded solitudes of Orestis, Clitus promised him a secure retreat among the loyal adherents of his ancient tribe. Crossing the Scordus mountains with his companions, they accordingly directed their steps toward the South. But ere they had proceeded a day's journey great was their surprise to encounter Philip's spies, some of whom Alexander had similarly employed in the Thracian and Grecian campaigns. From them Alexander learned that the King was hastening at the head of his army to attack the Illyrian King Pleurias, who had declared war and was then on the borders of the kingdom. Nor was it probable, they thought, that a battle would be long delayed; and so it turned out.

Advised in this way of the presence of the King and the direction of his march Alexander followed after with his companions, awaiting the event of the conflict. When at last the forces encountered each other in battle Alexander was some distance away, and so did not reach the field until the conflict had been some time in progress. But opportunely as it appeared, for the King's troops wavering under the savage onslaught of the Illyrian forces, Alexander and his companions emerging from the forest,

charged them at headlong speed, and with such fury that the enemy, unable to withstand the shock, and thinking unexpected reinforcements had arrived, turned and fled in wild disorder.

Returning from the pursuit, Alexander crossed the field of battle, and doing so was astonished beyond measure to come upon Glaucus, the Illyrian who had so recently befriended him. This unconquerable chief, recognizing him, made no sign, but stood amid the remnant of his tribe, his head high aloft in savage defiance of the enemies who surrounded him. Dismounting in haste, Alexander embraced him with tender expressions of friendship, exclaiming:

"'Tis a sorry sight, courageous chief, and grieves me to the heart to find you thus a captive among your enemies. You who but a day ago afforded me and my friends the shelter and hospitality of your country."

"'Tis the fate of war, oh Prince, and why may not my skull light an enemy to bed as well as another's," he answered, referring to his practice of using his enemy's skulls in this way.

"Alas, that would be but a sorry return for your generous hospitality. Surely the King will not thus repay your great kindness," Alexander answered, deeply moved.

"Nay, 'tis not likely he will grant me favor, for I have ever been the first to set foot on his domain when war was on," Glaucus exclaimed, unmoved.

"The King slays not those who yield nor visits upon his enemies the memory of conflicts past," Alexander answered confidently.

"To be killed is naught, but I like not these thongs,"

the chieftain replied, gazing with sorrow on his bonds. "They too surely forecast the slave market and a life of servitude. Let him slay me! I care not. 'Tis the other I fear," he went on, contemplating his shackled limbs.

Cutting the cords with his sword and bidding his companions to do the same with Glaucus' tribesmen, Alexander cried out:

"I will claim your freedom of the King as the measure of our reward if we have done aught this day to merit favor in his eyes," and embracing the stalwart chieftain he hastened to find the King.

Philip, who knew not the source from whence the timely aid had come, stood alone before his tent as Alexander approached. Recognizing his son as he drew near, he stirred not, astonished and overcome at the unexpected meeting. Hurrying forward, intent upon his errand of mercy, Alexander would have fallen upon his knees, but the King, reaching out, caught him in his arms and kissing him exclaimed:

"Not so do I receive you, my brave and loyal son, but on my very heart as in the days when we were one."

Embracing his father in return, deeply affected by his greeting, Alexander for some time could make no response. At last, overcoming his emotion, he made known his request and the reason therefor, praying the King to do as he asked.

"What!" Philip screamed in rage, "release that untamable savage, that mountain rat, who gnaws my grain sacks and runs off my cattle when open war does not unsheathe his bloody sword! But have your way; 'twas a kindness he did you and one I would repay with a

province, were he to ask it," the King went on, his mood changing, delighted at being able to do Alexander a service.

Falling on his knees Alexander kissed the King's hand in grateful thanks, begging that he would lose no time in fulfilling the act of mercy. And on the King's giving orders for the release of Glaucus and his adherents, Alexander sought permission to accompany the messenger in person. Doing so, he restored to the chief his arms, and then tenderly embracing him bade him adieu with many expressions of sincere regard. This duty of friendship performed, Alexander hastened to the King's side to ask respecting the doings at Pella, but more than all of his love, Roxana, about whom he had heard nothing for many weeks. The King, knowing nothing of Alexander's having wed the Princess, answered bluntly:

"That sweet woman, worthy to be Queen of all the world, is, ere this, far on her way to her own country."

"To her own country, oh King! Have you then sent her away?" Alexander asked with choked voice, his heart standing still.

"Yes, with her father, the noble Oxyartes, but with every honor and upon my own ship, suitably convoyed, that all the world might see the high regard in which I hold her," the King responded with animation.

"'Twas an honor well bestowed," Alexander answered after a while, his heart overflowing.

"The Athenian fleet spreading all its sails and manned by the Grecian admiral would not have been too much."

"But it was reported," the Prince went on, regaining

somewhat his composure, "that she was much set upon by my enemies about the court, and that her father was not able to shield her from the harassment."

"By the Gods, I knew naught of such a thing," the King answered astonished, "and well it was that I did not, if it be true, for of all women living or dead none have I ever more esteemed."

"Well you may, oh King, for she is the pearl of all women," Alexander answered with rapturous passion.

"Yes, and believing it to be so I thrice offered her the crown, promising to banish all others if she would become my wife," Philip exclaimed, his face flushing at the recollection.

Hearing this Alexander half drew his sword, so great was his surprise and rage, but Philip, putting his hand aside, cried out:

"Fret not your heart, my son, nor let anger stir you because of what I did, for it but proved the faithfulness of her love for you. Not the crown of Macedonia, nor of Greece, nor Persia, nor all of them together, which I offered her, drew from her aught but a refusal," the King exclaimed, his face clouding at the remembrance of the cruel rebuff.

"Your offer surely, oh King, was not made to tempt her?" Alexander exclaimed, amazed, scarce crediting what the other said.

"No, nor to feed an idle fancy, as I am sometimes like to do. For she is of such grace and virtue that I, Philip, not less than other men, was sobered by the contact. Refusing me thrice as I say, I sent her back to Persia in all

honor, mourning her departure with a sore heart," the great King answered with deep emotion.

"Brave, gracious, sweetest of all women!" Alexander murmured, hiding his face in his hands to conceal the tears that filled his eyes.

"Yes, and worthy to be your Queen, when you shall reign. But 'tis not fit that you should wed her now, for it would destroy your chance of mounting the throne to wed a Persian Princess; and that were a foolish waste. You may win and have her, but first you must conquer Persia."

"Conquer Persia! I!" Alexander exclaimed, staring at the King astonished.

"Yes, you, Alexander," the King continued, smiling grimly.

"And you? I thought it the crowning ambition of your life," Alexander exclaimed, stirred to the heart by what the King said.

"So it was and would be were you absent. Now I will lead my armies no further than Asiatic Greece. 'Tis for you to do the rest, for distracted and warring Greece claims my presence here. Remaining and encouraging those who strive and putting down with an iron hand the demagogues and agitators," he went on with animated voice, "I will consolidate the political atoms of that great country and make of it an empire. Thus I will build up a mighty power, and Greece, being freed from its jealousies and petty aspirations, may pursue the lofty aims it has babbled of these three hundred years or more. In this labor I will make Demosthenes my minister, Alexander,

for he only among the Athenians is truly great. He only comprehended me from the first. He only has always opposed me. He only strove to consolidate the Grecian power and so stay my arms. But his countrymen, while they listened, spell bound, would not follow talk with warlike action."

"But Demosthenes is the enemy of our country, the disbursing agent of the Persian King," Alexander queried.

"Whatever he may have been matters not. He only comprehends events. He only saw from the first that I meditated the subjugation of Greece, and that only by staying my hand could Athens remain independent. He only is worthy to be my minister or thine, and with his help I will unite the severed parts of Greece and quiet its centuries of internal hatreds."

"No one less wise, less strong than you, oh King, can achieve so great an undertaking. Nor do I believe it possible with such agents as Demosthenes. New men must be sought. All those who direct Grecian thought must be swept away. They are mere dreamers and talkers. Men of the past. They cannot see that Greece must succumb at last to Rome, or some still more barbarous people without our unity and warlike strength; that, alone, Greece will be torn asunder piece-meal, and so, at last, enslaved; and by an alien and cruel race," Alexander exclaimed, excited by the thought.

"It shall be my duty to achieve this, and if Demosthenes and the others hang back—refuse us comradeship —I will put them aside and destroy them, as I have every

impediment that has obstructed my path.* It is my office to quiet Grecian animosities and bind up her wounds. It is yours to conquer and govern Persia, sharing her abundant riches with our impoverished country," the King cried, contemplating the work with exaltation.

"And afterwards?"

"Afterwards," the King continued, musing, "afterwards, when I am dead, you will consolidate the two kingdoms, governing both. Thus," he went on, his face lighting up, "the poor groundling, Macedonia, will, in the end, dominate the world."

Such were the lofty aims of the great King, so fertile in planning, so prompt in execution, so wise in governing. But alas, poor monarch, he was not to accomplish his mighty aims, and so both Greece and Persia, which could spare neither Philip nor Alexander, were to lose the advantage of their united lives, and in the end be little benefited by the efforts of either.

*This wholesale obliteration of Athenian and other Grecian obstructionists was afterwards carried out by the successors of Philip and Alexander. But, alas, by men not having either their exalted courage or genius for government, nor having the confidence of Macedonia. And so it was without avail, and Greece went on paltering and jabbering to her destruction.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEATH OF PHILIP.

Leaving now the domain of romance of which, indeed, little use has been made, there remains not much to tell save that which historians have loved to dwell upon for two thousand years and more. And, fitly enough, it is amid the resplendent scenery of Edessa, the ancient capital of Macedonia, that our story nears its close. Here, four hundred years before, Perdiccas, the first of the line of Dorian Kings, erected his citadel on the precipitous cliff and established his capital in the grassgrown valley below. Beside the castle walls the trickling mountain streams at last converging, plunged from the dizzy heights in glittering cascades to the foaming depths below. There, divided anew, the refreshing supply watered the ancient city and fertile plains beyond, forming at last the never-failing supply of Pella and its adjacent river. Within an arrow's flight of the ancient citadel and commanded by its rugged walls, the time-worn pass that connected the mountains and plains of Macedonia wound its devious way. Just as at a later day, when the last Macedonian King was overcome, it connected Rome with its subjugated provinces in the East.

Philip returning in all haste from the Illyrian campaign, found the historic city crowded with distinguished visitors, impatiently awaiting the events of the great fes-

tival. All the nobles and landed proprietors of Macedonia who could afford a cloak or decent coat were there, their slender purses strained to the utmost to make a notable display. The Grecian states and cities, anxious to conciliate the rising power of the North, each sent their foremost citizens to do homage to the mighty King. From Thrace and the wild countries to the north and west came barbaric Kings and Princes, attended by their savage chiefs and allies. Dressed in picturesque attire, resplendent with color, they offered humble obeisance to the mighty warrior who beat back their invading forces with iron hand as the bear overcomes and crushes its less powerful enemies.

Among the savage chieftains who thus came to do honor to the King was Glaucus, the Illyrian. Nor came he empty handed, but with drinking cups and staffs for torches, some of which, as he privately explained to Alexander, he had been so fortunate as to collect since the latter's visit. All these he presented to Philip in person, and doing so thanked him for his leniency after the recent battle. At which the King, much pleased, patted the cheek of the savage chieftain and smiled upon him, delighted with his person and the singular presents he brought.

Philip, all unconscious of his impending fate and despising his enemies as in the past, had invited Olympias, the implacable Queen, to return to Macedonia to witness the marriage of her daughter to the Molossian King. For it was this event, intended to cement the bonds of peace between Macedonia and Epirus, not less than the celebration of the birth of a son by Cleopatra, that was the occasion and excuse for the great festival.

Of the conspiracy divulged while he lay concealed in the darkened room of Parcledes' hut, the King thought not at all. Filled with anger and shame on that eventful night, he had returned to his palace vowing vengeance against all his enemies. But first the invasion of the Illyrian King must be met and crushed; afterwards he would mete out punishment to the conspirators who took advantage of his complaisant disposition. But now, returning amidst the preparations for the great festival, he put off his resolve until a later day, unwilling that the world should witness the internal dissensions of his kingdom.

The conspirators, all unaware that their treason was known to the King, renewed their plotting, emboldened by the impunity of the past and the confusion attendant upon the great festival. Amyntas, whose impatience and hatred grew with the passing years, lost no opportunity to stir the enemies of the King to fresh endeavors. To the Lyncestian Princes he gave gold and costly presents, supplied from the abundant treasures of the Persian agent, Mithrines. These he promised to follow by coveted preferment and alluring honors when he should mount the throne. Most of all he excited anew the jealousy and rage of Pausanias against the King, because of the latter's refusal to redress a hideous and unnamable outrage Attalus had committed on the person of the young noble. Now, Attalus being in Asia on the King's affairs, and so beyond reach, Amyntas directed all Pausanias' hatred against Philip for having refused him redress and otherwise honoring his oppressor. In this way the young noble's discontent and rage, which was of long standing, because of his vanity and unsatisfied cravings, was awakened into new and bitter life.

Nor was the savage and relentless Olympias idle. Calling to her side all who had a grievance, she inflamed each with a desire for vengeance, promising redress of every wrong once the King were dead. Her instruments were those of Amyntas and the end the same, except that Alexander and not the other was to become King. Of this, however, she said nothing, save to those whose interests coincided with her own. But of all those she sought as agents, only the weak and vacillating Pausanias could be prevailed upon to openly venture, and he reluctantly. Calling him to her side as the eventful day drew near, she applied all her arts to win him over.

"You have many and sore grievances, Pausanias," she cried. "One loathsome and unappeasable, Attalus' work. As if that were not enough, the harlot Cleopatra openly scorns you, each day devising some new indignity to humiliate and wound you. Attalus, who has most harmed you and honored above all men by the King, you cannot reach. But Philip, who protects him and so deprives you of redress, is at your mercy. Killing him you will put an end to the lives of those who pursue you with scorn and malignant hatred, for not one shall survive him, I swear by all the Gods!"

"You promise this?" Pausanias cried, his eyes gleaming with hatred.

"Yes, death to them and all honor to you, Pausanias, for you shall have wealth, position and the fame you crave. All these you may achieve, and quickly, by putting the monster to death," she answered, her passion choking her voice.

"'Tis not an easy thing to do," he answered, his face

covered with sweat. "For the King goes not abroad unguarded."

"Are you not one of the guard and high in rank?" she cried impatiently. "Today, tomorrow, the day of the rain display, the opportunity may be offered you. Cause they your complaintings of wrongs unredressed and right them by a brave and manly deed."

"But how, oh Queen? Show me a way, for I can see none," he answered, somewhat impatiently.

"Have you not a sword, or better still a dagger? Do you fear to do what others with less cause have done?" she answered bitterly. "The deed committed, mount your horse and fly. The mountains afford you a secure retreat. Afterwards when Alexander is seated on the throne you may return to receive the honors and riches which I will bestow upon you," she concluded, and in this promise, as in all the acts of the great Queen, there was no trick or mental reservation.

"Having access to the King I may kill him, as you say, but what will it avail me if the next moment my body lies pierced by a hundred spears," Pausanias answered little moved.

"Fool! Have you no courage? No head to plan? Learn a lesson from the brave men who put Jason to death. Striking him down, surrounded by his army, they sought safety in flight and so saved themselves and destroyed an implacable foe, as you may do." Olympias exclaimed with savage energy.

"If the deed be done 'twill be for you to plan, oh Queen, for you gain more by the King's death than I," Pausanias answered sullenly.

"Then let us await the hour, nor seek to do a thing contrary to the will of the Gods."

"The Gods have already decreed Philip's death. Such is the oracle, and doing so make you the agent of their divine will." Olympias cried, as if inspired.

"The Gods have declared Philip's, the King's death?" Pausanias exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes, and most particularly," she went on, transfixing him with her piercing glance. "For thus runs the Delphic oracle, voiced by the priestess from the sacred temple: 'The bull is garlanded; his end draws near; the sacrificer stands ready.' Could a thing be more clearly foretold? For 'tis plain that Philip is the bull, and you the sacrificial agent of the mighty Gods, for you only have the fortitude to perform the deed." Olympias concluded with impressive voice.

Deeply excited, his vanity stirred to the utmost pitch by the exalted summons, Pausanias for a long time remained silent. At last raising his head aloft and extending his hands to heaven as if answering the command, he cried with staring eyes:

"Enough! The Gods ordain his end. I will obey. 'Tis for you, oh Queen, to devise the way—for me to act," and turning abruptly he rushed from the room.

"Vain, deluded fool," she cried as she saw him depart. "I will find a way, and if you fail it matters little. Alexander will be King; and Cleopatra!" she added, choking at the name, as she raised her arms in a frenzy of passion, "not all the Gods, nor Alexander's protecting arm, shall save her and her bastard child from the fury of my wrath."

[illegible]

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"[illegible]"

"It cannot be. The mighty King is not thus easily to be set aside," Clitus answered resolutely.

"He is in the hands of the Gods and they have decreed his death from Delphos' sacred altar," she cried, triumphantly. " 'The bull is garlanded for the sacrifice.' So the oracle runs, and Philip dead the infant will be thrust aside as Amyntas was and, thus, Attalus will at last be King."

"Attalus! The Gods forbid!" Clitus exclaimed deeply excited by what the other said.

"The Gods will not prevent it, more than in Amyntas' case, if Alexander's friends stand still with folded arms," she cried.

"After Philip, whether he die of old age or the thrust of a dagger, no one shall succeed him but Alexander," Clitus answered resolutely. "Nor would the army acknowledge another King," he went on, convinced of the truth of what he said.

"The army will hail as King the Prince who first mounts the throne. Or there being no preference, he who promises it most. If Alexander then be its choice 'tis for his friends to see that he is not forestalled by rival claimants as will surely happen if they stand idly by."

"No other can be crowned. 'Tis a thing impossible."

"Not more impossible than the overthrow and death of an hundred expectant Princes in the lifetime of this blood-soaked country," she answered. "Amyntas, who plotted Philip's and Alexander's death at Pella, still hopes to be King. If Philip fall, and Attalus be absent, as at present, he will strive for the crown, and so striving will succeed if Alexander's friends be not alert."

"What would you have?" Clitus responded, surprised and bewildered by what he heard; for it was not as if she spoke of some possible event, but as of a thing determined and of certain and quick occurrence, of which neither he nor his friends had any knowledge whatever.

"I would have you form an impenetrable guard about Alexander's body," she cried. "Not conspicuous of notice, but of real substance and strength. Thus protected he cannot be stricken down as Amyntas planned at Pella. If Philip, less watchful," she went on significantly, "succumb to the foes he protects and favors, lose not a moment in proclaiming Alexander King. It matters not the place. Then hasten with all speed to the regal palace and occupying it proclaim his accession there. From thence let the pronouncement be sounded by voice and trumpet throughout the city. Lest the army hesitate, the Persian invasion must be proclaimed anew, with promises of whatever else the soldiers crave. Thus will the Prince come to his own and his enemies be put to flight," she concluded, as if declaiming from a written proclamation.

Clitus, speechless, astonished beyond thought at what he heard, made no answer but stood gazing with leaden eye on the undaunted woman.

Assured at last of Clitus' fidelity, she dismissed him, exclaiming:

"Do as I command, Clitus, nor breathe what I have said to any save Alexander's friends. To him say naught lest the succession be endangered by some chivalrous act and our enemies triumph over him as well as the King. There, go! And remember the safety of the monarchy

and the stay of Macedonia lies in the preservation of Alexander's life. That is your office, brave man; there is no other."

Thus coldly was the death of Philip planned and the accession of Alexander ordered by the betrayed and relentless Queen.

To Philip the great festival now in progress had a purpose outside those proclaimed, and of far greater political importance to him. For it was his design to make the world feel and acknowledge that Macedonia was in every way a Grecian state. Master of Greece, he wished to be thought a Greek. In furtherance of this, the games the Greeks loved and the sacrifices they revered were conducted on a scale of unparalleled magnificence. Interspersed with these were sumptuous banquets and grave ceremonials of state. The display of his unrivaled cavalry and infantry, which was of hourly occurrence, had too an ulterior purpose, as was the case with all that Philip did. About the regal palace and in the streets of the ancient city the music of flutes and clang of timbrels, mingled throughout the day with the barbaric instruments of the mountain tribes. Dancing girls in short tunics of brilliant colors accompanied by clowns and strolling players, delighted and held the vast throng of common people who filled the streets and houses. In the theaters, that nothing might be wanting, actors from Athens led by Neoptolemus afforded entertainment and diversion for the royal family and their distinguished guests. At night, as if sleep were a thing denied, huge bonfires illuminated the towering cliffs and adjacent mountains, casting a lurid light over the city and surrounding country.

Such was the interesting and varied aspect of the city as the culminating event of the great festival approached. Mindful that its conclusion should accord with the dignity of the King, the attendant ceremonies were to be held in the royal theater, a stately building standing conspicuously in the center of the city. As this would hold only the distinguished guests of the King and Queen it was determined, in order that the common people might participate in the event, that the procession should start from the regal seat. Accordingly at noon on the eventful day the procession formed with stately ceremony in the enclosure about the King's palace. Issuing from the gates it was preceded by mounted troops, followed by the King's musicians in their varied and resplendent costumes. Afterwards came in order the ministers of the King, the Princes of the realm and the representatives and chiefs of the visiting states and tribes. Following these the King's royal pages in crimson cloaks and waving plumes added to the moving scene. Back of these were borne aloft statues of the twelve Gods of Greece and mingling with them the image of Philip, who thus declared himself one of their number. Behind these sacred emblems the King walked, unarmed, dressed in a robe of white. Following close upon his person and adding to the splendor of the spectacle, came the royal bodyguard, succeeded by troops of every description in resplendent uniforms.

Nearing the theater amid the wild acclaim of the excited throng, Philip motioned his guard to fall back that the view of the multitude might be less obstructed. Proceeding thus alone, he slowly approached the entrance

to the vast structure. Observing the Prince and those who had followed him into exile standing somewhat apart, the King gravely saluted them, smiling his pleasure with the action. Alexander's companions seeing this, fell on their knees, overcome by the unexpected and gracious act, and thus they remained with bowed heads until the King had passed.

Unconscious of danger Philip reached the entrance to the vast structure crowded to its utmost capacity. Looking forward he beheld Olympias with arm uplifted, her gaze fixed with fiery intensity upon some object to his right. Thinking it a signal he turned his head curious to know the cause, and as he did so Pausanias suddenly emerged with wild, distracted air from the sheltered alcove where he stood concealed. Drawing a gallic sword from beneath his cloak he rushed furiously upon the unarmed King, and without cry or speech of any kind, buried the glistening blade to the hilt in Philip's body. The King, sinking down, Pausanias turned and ran to reach the horse that awaited him without the enclosure, but tripping on a vine stalk fell to the ground and ere he could regain his feet was overtaken and put to death. Such was the ending of this vain and wretched man as men saw it and as the chroniclers do not fail to recount.

Filled with horror at the cruel deed the multitude remained spellbound, unable to move or cry aloud. Not so those privy to the act. Seeing the King fall Amyntas and those grouped about him instantly drew their swords, crying "Treason! Treason!" Hearing the familiar cry and observing the movements of the conspirators, Alexander's friends unsheathed their weapons and closed about their

beloved Prince. Seeing this Amyntas and his companions, after advancing some distance, turned abruptly away as if meditating him no harm. Alexander, transfixed with horror and all unconscious of what was transpiring about him, arousing himself, ran with all speed to where the King lay. Reaching his side he knelt and tenderly raised the head of the stricken monarch, resting it on his lap. Opening his eyes and recognizing his son, Philip clasped his arms about Alexander's neck, and drawing him down kissed him, exclaiming, as he struggled for utterance:

"My hour has come; 'tis a thing ordained, and you will soon be King. When I am dead waste not the precious moments, but hasten to proclaim yourself ere those who strive for the crown take advantage of your negligence. When you are King," he continued, gasping for breath and thinking of the work he had left undone, "marshal your army and do as we have planned. Having conquered Persia and your power being then secure, seek your love, and finding the sweet Roxana, make her your Queen. 'Twas an ungracious act," he went on, with a melancholy smile, "to send her away, and if I erred you will forgive me now," he concluded, struggling against the chill of death, his face ashy white.

"Speak not of such a thing at such a time, father, wisest, greatest of Kings," Alexander cried in a choked voice as he bent over and kissed the face of the dying monarch.

"Raise me up, Alexander, for it grows strangely dark," Philip muttered looking about him. Distinguishing the faces of Clitus and the others bending over him, tears streaming from their eyes, he smiled with something of

the bon homme of other days, saying: "Have I been a hard master, comrades?" Then lifting his dimmed eyes that his last look might dwell on the face of his immortal son, he went on with voice scarce above a whisper, "I proclaim Alexander King. Serve him, my brave soldiers, as you have served Philip," and giving a deep sigh the mighty King lay dead.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FULFILLMENT OF LIFE'S IDEAL.

Immediately upon the death of Philip, Alexander was crowned King amidst the rejoicings of the army and the people of Macedonia. Stilling the internal dissensions of his court, he presently found himself beset by open enemies on all the borders of his kingdom. Armed revolt was everywhere proclaimed throughout discordant Greece, the ignorant multitude inflamed by demagogues, believing Macedonia fatally weakened by Philip's death. Demosthenes and others less patriotic than he, emerging from their retirement, openly advocated an alliance of the Grecian states against the military power of Macedonia. Apprised of the growing discontent, Alexander collecting his forces, lost no time in marching into Greece. Reaching Thessaly he reared his tent in the slumbering vale of Tempe on the spot where Roxana and he had first plighted their love. Here, beset by enemies on every side, he found a melancholy comfort in remembrance of the past; and in the stillness of the night, offering sacrifice to the Gods, he looked upward to the snow-clad summit of the Sacred Mountain, glistening amid the starlit sky, as he renewed his vows of undying constancy. Comforted by the act he, on the morrow, continued his march, and this to a successful conclusion. For the Greeks, unable to withstand his invincible army or firm determination, proclaimed him Imperator as they had Philip. Thus the tran-

quillity of Greece was assured; a necessary thing, as in Philip's reign, for without it the Persian invasion, upon which Alexander's mind was unalterably fixed, was a thing improbable if not impossible.

Returning to Macedonia with his army the King marched into Thrace and so to the north, crossing the Balkan to the plains beyond where the savage tribes had collected to oppose him. Defeating the Triballi in a great battle, wherein three thousand of the enemy were slain, he pursued his march to the Danube. Reaching the great river he crossed it in the night on improvised boats and rafts, a thing unexampled, and, attacking the enemy in the early morning, broke their ranks and put them to flight. Offering sacrifice to the Gods he recrossed the river, and marching from thence through the mountain passes of the north came upon the Illyrian army which had been gathered about Pelion to invade his country. Repulsed in the first onslaught he returned in the night and surprising the Illyrians attacked them with savage fury, and so overcome and destroyed their army. While thus engaged news reached him that Thebes had revolted and was besieging the Kadmeia, a fortress occupied by Macedonian soldiers, on the outskirts of the ancient city. Losing no time he directed his course towards Greece, marching through the mountain defiles of Western Macedonia. Thus it turned out that while the disaffected Grecians, having heard nothing from him for many weeks, believing him dead and his army destroyed, he suddenly appeared in the plains of Thessaly. Reaching Thebes, and it refusing submission, he stormed the walled city, and, capturing it, gave it over to pillage by his soldiers.

Conscious at last that the power of Macedonia had been strengthened rather than weakened by Philip's death, the savage tribes sued for peace; and Greece, humbled and dejected, sought no further to oppose the young King's will. Returning to Macedonia with his army and no longer fearing enemies from without or within, he hastened his preparations for the conquest of Persia. So it came about that two years after the death of Philip he crossed the Hellespont into Asia, triumphant over all who had threatened him at home and abroad.

The entrancing image of his love Roxana ever before him, Alexander marched straight for the army of Darius, which awaited his approach on the further shore of the river Granicus. Crossing the stream in the face of the courageous opposition of the enemy, the army of the great King was finally overcome and its scattered fragments put to rout. Turning to the south the impregnable citadel of Sardis was surrendered by its traitorous governor, Mithrines, without a blow, after which Alexander quickly overrun and quieted all Asia Minor. Reaching Syria and the eastern shore of the Mediterranean he met and destroyed the Persian army, six hundred thousand strong, at the great battle of Issus, where he captured the wife and daughter of Darius. Giving them tents and attendants apart, and treating them with sovereign honor, he continued his march, conquering Sidon and Tyre, and afterwards Egypt. His base at last secure, he set his face towards Central Asia, where, at the great battle of Arbela, he overthrew and scattered Darius' army, numbering a million men. This culminating victory opened to him all Central Persia and its capitals and the accumulated

treasures of the great King, amounting, historians aver, to five hundred million dollars of gold and silver. In all these achievements, so glorious and unexampled, Alexander was followed by Clitus and the cherished friends who had accompanied him in his exile from Pella.

Accepting the submission and homage of Babylon and Susa and Persepolis, the birthplace of Persian power, Alexander was proclaimed King of the vast empire. Instituting orderly governments and establishing his power throughout all the conquered territory he took his way to the far East, assured at last of the consummation of his undying passion.

"Despair not of thy love, oh Prince, until twice a King it shall still be denied thee."

Overcoming, one by one, the armies and walled cities that stood out against him in Upper and Eastern Asia, he, at length, approached the stronghold of Persian power in far-off Bactria. Here, the brave and ever loyal Oxyartes, keeping alive the flame of patriotism to the last, refused submission to the young conquerer from the summit of his rock-bound citadel. Scaling the heights that overlooked the towering fortress, on a dark and stormy night in midwinter, Alexander effected the capture of the citadel by stratagem, and so, at length, found his love, Roxana.

Granting the soldiers a respite from all their toils, and rewarding them with honors and munificent gifts, Alexander gave up the days to love and the nights to feasting. At last, the contemplated conquest of India drawing near, he publicly espoused Roxana, proclaiming her Queen of Macedonia and Persia, amid the rejoicings of his follow-

ers and the delight of his Persian subjects. When in this way his every ambition and desire had been gratified Alexander, transported with joy, knelt before his love, and kissing her with rapturous passion, exclaimed:

"Beloved of heart, now at last you are mine. Now at last my every hope and dream of life is fulfilled. Now at last and in all honor and glory do my brave Macedonians possess a Queen worthy their great achievements and years of patient waiting."

"And now at last, sweet love, do I regain, and wholly, my true and simple Prince, Iskander," she murmured, bending over and kissing his upturned face, tears of joy filling her beautiful eyes.

Thus their union was consummated, and the hearts that love alone bound were united in happiness and honor, never again to be parted.

THE END.

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